TO ROME AND BACK.

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BY

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TO MY READERS.

MOST people, it is said, never read a preface. I hope, however, that every one who is good enough to read this book will prove to be an exception to the general rule, as I am anxious to anticipate one or two objections which may be made to my story, as a practically true record of the changes of an individual mind. It may be said that, as I now review myself and the scenes of long past years, I must necessarily be reviewing them from the point at which I now stand; and that my knowledge of my past self must be coloured by the influences of my present self. I see and admit the force of the objection, as such; and can only reply that, as a matter of fact, my memory of all the details of the circumstances under which these changes of opinion took

place is of the most vivid kind, and that its correctness is confirmed by many printed and private materials, and by a store of correspondence. Moreover, my story is not a narrative of alterations of feeling, but rather of the formation of a series of opinions, growing out of one another in a natural way, and, therefore, far more easily remembered with accuracy than those merely emotional changes, which are often transitory in their nature, and can scarcely be recalled at one's bidding.

Further, what I have written might be confirmed by many details of conversations and events, which I have scrupulously refrained from introducing, because they were most of them of essentially a private nature, and could not be put in print without reference to individual persons and individual societies. I could tell many an anecdote, and recount many a little history, which would interest and surprise the Protestant reader, but which would not change the general impression which I wish to convey to him. Some of them are in a high degree creditable to English Roman Catholics, and generally they

would tend to show that human nature, in its strength as well as its infirmities, is much the same everywhere, and is often far too strong for the institutions and opinions amidst which a man is living.

As I have said at the opening of my narrative, there is not one portrait of any real person in all the history of my Protestant days; and if in what follows an extreme and rare ingenuity may here and there detect some features of an individual countenance, I can say confidently that no man is here hinted at who has not long passed away from amongst us. For similar reasons, I have given no history of the various public controversies in which I was engaged while remaining in the Roman Church. I could not do it without supplying such sketches of living and departed men, both friends and opponents, as would instantly be recognised. The existing records of those controversies are, at the same time, a guarantee to myself of the substantial accuracy of my recollections. Those controversies, too, involved consequences to others, who, more or less, shared my

opinions, which I do not like to refer to in a narrative such as this. One only person I will here name, because, considering the relationship in which I stood to Cardinal Wiseman, it may be thought strange that I have made no mention of the changes which converted him from a friend into a literary and official antagonist—I will not say an enemy, because, with all his antagonistic tendencies, he was incapable of lasting ill-will. He was not, moreover, a man to be dismissed with a passing reference or a faintly outlined sketch, especially by myself. He was a person of very complex personality, united with a certain simplicity of character, which made him incapable of concealing from the public eye those defects, or even faults, which more crafty natures habitually hide. He was extremely ill-used by Lord Russell in the famous Durham letter, and thrown into a position for which he had no natural desire.

On one point alone in his character I think that my duty to his memory requires me to say a word or two at this time, when the separation between Catholics and

Protestants in all matters of education is being pushed to extremes by the dominant Roman authorities in this kingdom. Cardinal Wiseman was essentially a lover of culture, and a believer in it. He studied physical science with a genuine interest, when such studies were as rare among Roman as among Anglican ecclesiastics. He honestly thought that there is no necessary antagonism between freedom of thought and the Christian revelation as interpreted by Rome, or between English political institutions and Papal autocracy. He was, by training and by personal feelings, an Ultramontane; but I very much doubt whether he would have taken any prominent part in forcing forward the dogma of Papal Infallibility at the late Vatican Council. He delighted to be recognised as an Englishman and as a man of culture by miscellaneous critical audiences, with none of that vulgar ambition which was often attributed to him by persons of his own creed, who had a keen eye for his foibles, though they were incapable of appreciating his merits.

As for my story, as a whole, though it is told under feigned names and places, and, as I may say, dramatically, it is substantially a real personal history. I do not think that I have in any way actually caricatured the Oxford life of those memorable days, or misrepresented the manner in which the English Church was criticised by young men, such as I and so many others really were. Nor, again, do I think that I can fairly be charged with any reprehensible bearing towards the Roman Catholic body in England and elsewhere. I have told nothing that was not either of public notoriety, or matter of frequent talk of an almost public kind. I have tried to put the whole question between Rome and Protestantism in an argumentative, though narrative shape, without impertinently praising those whom I have loved and honoured, and still love and honour, and without insinuating anything against those who did not command my respect or engage my affections. And if any example is needed for my justification in thus writing concerning the Church to which

I once belonged, it is furnished me by no less an authority than Dr Newman himself, who, in his "Loss and Gain," gave to the Roman Catholic world a brilliant sketch of the inner life of Oxford Anglicanism, under feigned names and circumstances. He, like myself, led his hero to Rome; and surely I am equally justified if, after taking my hero to Rome, I bring him back again in a similar disguise, even though I confess to a substantial identity between that personage and myself.

J. M. CAPES.

TO ROME AND BACK.

CHAPTER I.

SUBMISSION to Rome is in many cases the result of a long series of mental growths and struggles, whose earliest beginnings it is not difficult to trace in after years. Such, at least, it was with me. I cannot remember the time when the idea of duty was not present to my mind, nor when it was not associated with a belief in the existence of some perfect realisation of my ideal of religious perfection. But it was at Oxford that this belief began to assume that shape which afterwards led me to imagine that this realisation was to be found in the Roman Church, and in the Roman Church alone.

For it is at Oxford that the young mind begins first to comprehend the organic character of all human life. Boys and girls have their own favourite ideals of perfection; but it is in certain individual men and women, rather than in the corporate life of any class, or succession of men, that they fancy that their ardent aspirations

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after ideal perfection are to be satisfied. When, however, the eager student, just passing from boyhood into youth, enters into his vivid and novel undergraduate life, then, for the first time, he begins to understand the relation of men to men, as members of one common humanity. He ceases to be the narrow-minded believer in the absolute blackness or absolute faultlessness of individual men and women, and learns to recognise the fact that no human being can possibly stand or live alone. His antipathies and his prepossessions may be, for the most part, as vehement as ever. But, at any rate, he begins to think. He takes a side in modern politics, and in the conflicts of ancient races. He sees that Greeks, and Romans, and Jews, and Englishmen, and Churchmen, and Dissenters, and Whigs, and Tories, are respectively held together by some deep and subtle bonds of union, which compel them to act together, and to feel instinctively alike on matters of practical moment. In other words, he begins to understand history as such. He sees that the actual life of to-day has its roots in the life of men who lived thousands of years ago.

And so he begins to look for the realisation of his religious ideal, not so much in perfect individual personages as in some grand and beautiful organisation. He conceives the idea of some nation, or church, or age, or race, in which all the pettinesses and vices of

to day are or were unknown; and in the contemplation of that perfection the whole force of his young poetic aspirations delights to expend itself. He becomes an enthusiast; that is, of course, if he is good for anything himself, for a young man who is incapable of enthusiasm is rarely anything better than a cold-hearted, conceited prig, or a slave to the lower passions of his nature.

To a young mind, thus beginning to estimate the possibilities of human life, when transfigured by the light of an ideal splendour, Oxford is pre-eminently the home where such thoughts are fostered and kindled into enduring vitality. To the ardent, undiscriminating eye of the well-disposed 'freshman,' it is the very embodiment of his ideal of bygone ages of learning, faith, and peace. The very trivialities and abuses of its existing life are capable of an ennobling interpretation, and seem to take him back to older and better times. To my own eyes and ears even the mumbling duet between one of the Fellows and one of the Scholars, which, at St Bede's, fulfilled the function of a grace before dinner, was neither ridiculous nor irreverent. It was long before I was able to catch the words which were uttered, and to the last I never could completely make out what they were, from the beginning to the end. They were evidently Latin, and, after one or two terms' residence, I

understood them so far as to perceive from the phrase, '*Justorum animæ in manibus Dei sunt*,' that they included a Protestantised version of the old Catholic prayer for the souls of deceased benefactors. But my sensibilities were not shocked; and I thought if ever it should be my good fortune to become a Fellow of the College, I should take my part in the duet with seriousness and enjoyment.

But it is in the perpetual sight of the buildings of the University that the young imagination takes most delight, when dreaming of the possibilities of a higher life. I well remember the day when this impression first struck me with a freshness and force that exercised a permanent influence on my after years. It was in my second term of residence. I had just been to a wine party at Lancaster College, which deserves more than a passing mention, because it was one of many similar gatherings in which the mind of the young Oxford of the day was moulded to the shape it afterwards exhibited to the somewhat bewildered outside world. It was the first time, too, when I had met a real undergraduate representative of the new religious school, then beginning to make a noise in the University, and to attract serious attention from the existing theological parties of the day.*

* It need hardly be remarked that in the case of all the scenes

It had promised to be a pleasant party enough. Indeed, to my still 'fresh' tastes almost any party was pleasant and welcome. But I was beginning to criticise the 'men' of my own standing, while suspicions were beginning to dawn upon my mind that a couple of years' seniority in undergraduate residence did not invariably confer that infallible wisdom and superiority which at first I had been disposed to attribute to the men who were thus far my seniors. The wine had been circulating freely but by no means immoderately — and what detestable wine it must have been !—and I was listening, with truly reverential deference, to a discussion on the wretched demerits of the Lancaster 'torpid,' when I was startled by a sudden rise in the tone of the voices at the other end of the table.

'I knew there would be a row,' whispered my next neighbour, North, a St Bede's man, somewhat my senior, 'the moment I saw that Hawkstone had asked both Gordon and Barge. Hawkstone is a good fellow enough, but he has a hole in his head, and asks men to meet one another who haven't a single taste in common.'

and persons to be described in the following pages, the reality has been so disguised as to prevent their being recognised as pictures of literal fact. The whole are, however, dramatically true, as representative of the real Oxford life of the time, and as embodying the history of the progress of an actual mind in its struggles to solve the dark problems of the visible and the invisible.

'Why, what are they quarrelling about?' I asked.

'Listen,' said North, 'and you'll soon understand.'

The whole room was now silent, watching Gordon and Barge, who sat opposite one another with excited faces.

'You have no right to ask me such questions,' exclaimed Gordon with a grave and somewhat scornful solemnity.

'But I have,' retorted the other, 'and no fear of man shall tempt me to be silent when I see these Popish practices spreading every day in half the colleges of the University.'

'Barge is awfully Low Church,' observed North to me in an undertone. 'He got into a pretty scrape last term with the old President.'

I had heard something of this before, but I was too much struck with the expression of Gordon's countenance to pay much heed to my neighbour's commentaries. He looked pained and disgusted, and at the same time intensely self-conscious, but he said nothing.

'Come, Gordon,' at length broke in another man, 'I think you're bound to reply. You fellows of this new party do yourselves no end of mischief by the secrecy you seem to make a boast of.'

'It's nothing of the sort,' cried Gordon, now fairly off his balance; 'but I do say that the most sacred feelings of one's conscience are not to be made a parade of.'

'Nonsense, my dear fellow,' interposed Hawkstone, who was a sort of professed peacemaker, and who blundered accordingly on almost all occasions. I'm sure we hate parade as much as you can do; but Barge was only asking you a plain question, which you needn't be ashamed to answer.'

'Touch him up about the rubric,' said North, looking mischievous, and addressing himself to Barge. 'He swears by the rubric, you know, and if you handle the rubric judiciously, you can turn these sort of fellows inside out as often as you please.'

'Don't be profane, North, if you please,' cried Gordon, looking more shocked and pained than ever.

'Profane!' echoed North, while he secretly nudged me, to imply that he was only trotting Gordon out for the amusement of the company. 'Where's the profaneness? Is it you yourself, or the rubric, that is too sacred a subject for jesting?'

'I am not jesting at any rate,' interrupted Barge, 'and I repeat that I have a right to have a direct answer to the question I asked.'

'Well! what is it?' cried North; 'your cross-examination of Gordon, which I have no doubt was very brilliant, was lost upon us at this end of the room.'

'I wish to ask Gordon, then,' said Barge, in the most solemn of tones, 'whether it is true that he fasts on

Fridays on bread and water, and every morning puts on a surplice to say his prayers in?'

A general shout of laughter greeted this latter part of the question, followed by a torrent of questions showered upon the unfortunate Gordon.

'Impossible!' cried one. 'Nonsense!' exclaimed another. 'I say, Gordon, this is rather strong,' said a third.

'Once more, I ask, is it true?' demanded Barge, when quiet was a little restored.

'I have never had a surplice in my rooms since I came up,' Gordon at length replied; 'and it is not true that I fast upon bread and water.'

'Jesuitical! by Jove!' remarked North to me, with a laugh.

'Then you do fast upon something else,' exclaimed another, a stranger to me.

'Why not?' asked Gordon, regaining his calm, and looking resolutely at his questioner. 'I am not ashamed to own that I take the Prayer Book for my guide, and that I try to obey it.'

'Do you mean to say, Gordon,' North asked, now looking a little serious himself, 'that as a matter of fact you go without your breakfast and dinner every Friday?'

'I refuse to be questioned about my private affairs,' replied Gordon.

"Well, man,' retorted North, 'why should you be ashamed of it? Anyhow, a man must be in earnest about his religion, when he takes to starvation to prove his sincerity.'

'I don't want to prove anything at all,' Gordon answered; 'I merely wish to do my duty.'

'And an awfully unpleasant sort of duty too!' exclaimed North, adding immediately, 'I say, Barge, pass the sherry. We've had enough of this for one evening.'

Barge passed the sherry, but looked the reverse of mollified.

'By the by, Barge,' North immediately added, again nudging me with his elbow, 'is it true that you were seen coming into College the other night in pink, splashed from head to foot?' Then he whispered to me, 'He knows nothing about hunting. He thinks the hounds go out all the year round.'

'I will not stay to be made a jest of,' cried Barge, reddening with irritation. 'You know well that I have something else to do besides following worldly amusements.'

And he rose, with the intention of leaving the room.

'Come, come, my good fellow,' rejoined North, 'you shouldn't cut up rough in that way. A fellow like you that goes up on the sly to London, and comes slinking

into College just before twelve at night, should be prepared to take a joke in good part.'

'Ho! ho! Barge,' exclaimed another, 'is this a true count against you?'

'It is true that I went to London,' rejoined Barge fiercely, 'but I went for a good and holy purpose; and I am not ashamed to confess it.'

'For which good and holy purpose old Baggs very nearly sent you about your business,' observed North. 'We know all about it. Your respected President has no taste for prayer-meetings, and in my hearing once made a remark about Exeter Hall which you would think as profane as Gordon thought my innocent suggestions concerning rubrics.'

'Who did you pray for?' asked a rather impudent-looking freshman, with a coarse expletive, which I will not repeat.

'Come, come,' North sharply exclaimed, 'none of that sort of thing here, my good friend. It's bad taste, you know, and we don't like it.'

The man looked astonished, but said nothing; and the talk took another turn, less lively, but less personal. Barge sat down again, but in a few minutes he got up and left the room. When the party at length broke up, and the men dispersed in different directions, I found myself by Gordon's side. As I had not been introduced to

him, I felt shy of speaking, though his way was the same as mine. But he soon broke the ice with the remark—

'You 've not been long up, I fancy?'

'My second term,' I replied.

We then walked on in silence, till we turned out of the High Street, and came into the midst of the superb group of buildings, of which the Radcliffe Library forms the striking, and yet somewhat incongruous centre. They were all bathed in a flood of moonlight, and I stopped involuntarily to drink in the lovely sight.

'What a glorious scene it is!' I said to my companion, who stood still, as much absorbed in what he saw as I was myself.

'Yes,' he said in a few moments, 'the work of other days. When that tower and spire were designed,' he went on, pointing to St Mary's, as its noble spire and pinnacles stood out dark against the almost starless sky, so bright was the moonlight, 'men built for God, and not for themselves. Nowadays everything is for show or for these low utilitarian ends.'

'What in the world do you mean?' I asked completely puzzled. 'Reverence is unknown,' he went on, without answering what I had said. 'Religion is all familiarity; and the shams we build and then call them churches, are the natural result of the hollowness of our feelings.'

He spoke with a strange earnestness, which affected me far more than his words themselves.

'Will you think me an impertinent fellow,' I could not help saying, 'if I ask you one question? Is it true that you fast on Fridays?'

'I only keep the rules of the Church to which we all belong,' he replied, without the slightest dogmatism or conceit.

'But what is the use of it?' I said. 'Surely God is not pleased at your going without your breakfast and dinner.'

'Without personal mortification there can be no true peace of mind for a sinner,' he replied.

'But are you not happy yourself?' I said.

'How can any man tell that his sins are forgiven?' he answered. 'How do *you* know that *your* sins are forgiven?' he continued, in a low, sad tone, and fixing his eyes upon the ground before him. Then he went on, murmuring with a quiet and musical voice—

> 'The golden keys each eve and morn,
> I see them with a heart forlorn,
> Lest they should iron prove to me;
> Oh, set my heart at liberty!
> May I seize what Thou dost give,—
> Seize tremblingly and live.'

'What verses are those?' I asked him.

'They are part of a few stanzas that were shown to me

in manuscript the other day,' he replied. 'I learnt them by heart, as they exactly express my own feelings.'

'To me their sentiment is utterly incomprehensible,' I rejoined. 'I can't understand a man being afraid of God.'

As I said this I lowered my voice, as if the subject was too sacred to be spoken of. It was the first time I had ever spoken about God to any one at Oxford; and in fact I had never before, in all my life, expressed myself at all openly concerning my religious thoughts. And when I did now speak, I almost felt as if I was treading with rash feet upon holy ground.

'I don't think I should be afraid of Him,' said Gordon; 'but I am afraid of myself; and you know how the Bible is always teaching us how awful the Almighty is in his holiness. And that is what is so shocking in the popular religion of the day. It never begins with wholesome fear and self-denial; but rushes at once into raptures which are entirely against the spirit of the Church herself.'

'All this sort of thing is so new to me,' I replied, 'that I don't like to say either that I agree with you, or that I disagree with you. But I must confess I don't see what the Church has to do with the matter.'

'Then you don't feel any comfort in the declarations

of the Church, through her ministers, that your sins are forgiven,' he said.

'Why should I?' I asked.

'To me it is everything,' he answered. 'I think that the first duty of every man is obedience and humility, and a desire to be taught by one's betters. And that is why the sight of these old churches fills me with envy and sadness. Just look at that wonderful tower and spire. Was there ever anything more solid and grand, and yet more aspiring and full of grace, rising up into the silent heaven? The men who built it had their sins forgiven by the absolution of Christ's own ministers, and so they were like the spire itself that they designed and finished: strong and solid in their foundation of repentance, and absolved from all their sins. And thus their hearts rose continually in quiet peace towards the throne of God.'

As he thus went on in a half rhapsody I stood watching him in amazement. I could not detect in him the faintest element of unreality and cant; but it was altogether a strange thing to me to hear any one, and especially a young man, speak in such a manner on such things out of the pulpit, and as if he really meant every word that he uttered. It was all like a sort of dream, in which the moonlit buildings in their eloquent beauty supplied a background of dim, hazy brightness, while

my whole mind seemed transported into another world of existence. To this day, when I close my eyes, I can recall the sight, and the thoughts it conjured up within me. There was All Souls', and the Schools, and Brasenose, and the great dome of the Library, and St. Mary's high above them all, with the rays of light glimmering through the spacious windows. They seemed the airy, ghost-like habitations of generations of great and pious men, long gone away, and leaving nothing of their great principles behind them, but only the works of their hands, to reproach us for having fallen away into the debasement of these worldly, faithless, money-getting times. It was but a dream at the very moment when I yielded to its fascinations; but it was a dream that lingered in my memory ever afterwards, and helped to give a shape to every religious speculation that crossed my thoughts.

For some minutes neither Gordon nor I said anything. Then suddenly the recollections of the wine party we had just left rushed into my mind, with a most disagreeable intrusiveness.

'Barge's views must be very different from yours,' I observed, as we at last moved on.

'Yes,' replied Gordon, standing still again, with a look half of sadness, and half of disgust; 'there you have the religion of the nineteenth century in all its shallow

ugliness. There's a fellow who laughs at his college rules, and goes up to town for a prayer-meeting, and calls it a preferring of God to the world. Happily, he's not of a breed that's very common in Oxford; but he might have been satisfied with the prayer-meetings here, without joining the fanatics in Exeter Hall.'

'Do you mean to say that such things go on in Oxford?' I inquired in surprise.

'That I do,' said Gordon. 'And if you want to know the blessing of belonging to the Church, and the wisdom with which she saves us from ourselves, you have only to go some evening and hear the expounding and the praying that are indulged in. I went once; and heard the best men in Oxford actually prayed at, by a miserable fellow who had been just plucked for his Little-Go. But come, let us drop the nauseous subject, and take a turn or two under these shadows, and hope for better days once more.'

As he spoke, he took my arm with a manifest access of friendliness, and for some little time we paced up and down without speaking. I was so excited that I was glad to uncover my head to let the cool spring breeze play upon my forehead. And as I took off my cap, I almost felt as if I were making an act of homage to some living unseen presence, whose home was in the heaven above, and whose power must still be visible

somewhere upon earth. Suddenly, a harsh din broke upon our ears, banishing the sweet stillness, and driving away all tender fancies and devout meditations. It came nearer and nearer, and we moved hastily on to learn whence it came.

As we walked quickly along, we soon found ourselves accompanied by other men, whose ears had caught the same sounds that had seized upon our own attention. From two or three of the College gates a few undergraduates rushed out, and ran in the direction whence the noise proceeded. To my surprise, though they were in cap and gown, they carried sticks in their hands, a proceeding altogether unknown, except to the very freshest of freshmen. It required no long experience of University life to see at once that they were by no means of the class of reading or quiet men, but exhibited that look of 'slanginess' which rapidly stamps itself upon the least reputable section of the undergraduate world.

'A town and gown row, I suspect,' said Gordon to me, as we watched them dashing along, with eagerness and anger lighting up their unattractive faces.

'Have you any notion what brought it on?' I asked, seeing that Gordon was apparently slackening his pace, and seemed rather anxious than otherwise to keep out of the fray.

'I haven't the least suspicion,' he answered; 'I hate

the very name of such scenes. They disgust me with Oxford more than I can tell you. They only serve to prove what we have come to from our loss of all high principles of action.'

'Why,' I exclaimed, 'I thought these fights were one of the very oldest institutions of the University. You can't think much of a shindy between a handful of big boys, just up from Eton and Westminster, and the young shopkeeping cads of the town.'

'It's something more than that, I can tell you,' he said. 'And the worst of it is that there's just now a regular party-set made against Winston—he's the senior proctor, you know—because of his Church principles; and there's no saying what's to follow if he gets into the middle of the fight.'

'What in the world can you mean?' I asked, as we had now reached the turning where Gordon would naturally have left me on the way to his College. But he stood still, clearly hesitating whether he ought to suffer me to get mixed up with the rioters without a remonstrance against my rashness.

'What can Church principles have to do with a fight in the streets at night-time?' I continued, wondering at this fresh exemplification of the conflict between the old and the new ideas of the hour.

'It is clear that you have kept clear of the fast set in

your College,' he replied, 'or you would have made Winston's acquaintance long before this. All the fast men hate him like poison, because he 's resolved to make the discipline of the Church something like a reality among the undergraduates.'

'This is quite a new light to me,' said I; 'I don't understand what the discipline of the Church is; I understand College rules and University rules, and all that sort of thing, and the rules of decent society besides. But as to these views of yours about the Church, I can't, for the life of me, make out what you mean.'

'You surely don't mean to say that the Church has no godly discipline of her own, and that the sins of us baptized men are no worse than other people's sins,' he said.

'I don't in the least understand you,' I replied.

'And it 's because of the views which Winston is known to hold about post-baptismal sin,' continued Gordon, 'that there 's a dead set made against him amongst the dons themselves. They say that Blakeney, the other proctor, will hardly speak to him. Blakeney's an Evangelical of the lowest sort, and goes about spreading all the mischievous tittle-tattle he can get hold of in every common room in Oxford.'

'Listen!' I exclaimed, as a fresh outburst of shouting told us that the riot was gathering strength. 'I can't

stand here listening to your exposition any longer, or I shall miss the sight after all.'

'Nonsense! my dear fellow,' cried Gordon, taking me roughly by the arm; 'you don't mean to say that you're going to mix yourself up with these scamps?'

'I only want to see what sort of a thing it is, I assure you,' I answered. 'But go I must; and where's the harm after all?'

'I can't let you go alone,' he rejoined; and then, still holding me by the arm, he allowed me to drag him along.

When we reached the Cornmarket, we could at first get no farther, for the street was thronged with a mob, in which town and gown appeared about equal in point of numbers. Almost everybody seemed violently excited, even down to the women—some of them carrying young children in their arms—who formed a by no means insignificant portion of the crowd. Of those who were near us, none of the townsmen were of the genuine rough sort. It was a mere throng of lookers on; working men, shopmen, and their masters. Nobody could answer our questionings as to the origin or facts of the riot, but we heard Winston's name so often on the lips both of the gownsmen and the others, that it was plain that he was supposed to be specially concerned in the riot in some way or other.

By degrees we found our way through the crowd,

Gordon still urging me to go no farther; but the nearer we reached the actual fight, as we supposed it must be, the more impossible I found it to tear myself away. I had never seen a street riot on any large scale, but the popular tradition of the perpetual feuds existing between City and University had often impressed my boyish fancy; and I considered that I should not have completely thrown off my freshness until I had witnessed what the reality was actually like.

Gordon's talk, too, had served rather to stimulate than to quiet my curiosity. There seemed something so excessively odd in the idea of connecting the sacrament of Baptism with a common riot, that it conferred a sort of factitious importance on the riot itself, and appeared to make it quite a duty to acquaint myself with the details of a conflict which branched out into such unexpected quarters. The words 'post-baptismal sin' still lingered in my ears, like a strange musical phrase linked to words in an unknown language. They conveyed no distinct ideas to my mind, but had a peculiar, forcible ring about them, which suggested the thought that they might have some very good or very bad meaning after all.

Then, too, here were all my reverential feelings towards the proctorial dignity rudely set aside. When I first came up to reside, the velvet sleeves of the proctors were in my eyes the very embodiment of the principle of

law, and order, and grave collegiate respectability. I fancied that it must be a very pleasant and honourable thing to be a proctor; especially when the pair of proctors sedately walked to their places near the vice-chancellor at the sermons at St Mary's, the 'pokers' marching in front of them, while the organ, very badly played, struck up a sort of solemn, heraldic strain. Even the lesser velvet adornments of the proproctorial gown had their fitting beauty, though of a humbler kind. The 'bull-dog' was still unknown to me, except by report; but I imagined him to be the very model of grave policemen, conscientiously pledged to support the proctorial mandates with his strong arm and stronger truncheon.

And now here was the whole proctorial dignity degraded before my fancy. A proctor, as an embodiment of Church principles, was a sufficiently novel conception taken by himself: but the thought of two proctors, one on the vice-chancellor's right, and the other on the vice-chancellor's left, representing antagonistic theologies, and scarcely speaking to one another in private, shattered my ideal to pieces. What, I thought, might not be the extraordinary incidents of a town and gown battle, when one proctor based his views of undergraduate government upon some recondite theories concerning baptism, which his brother-proctor denounced in all the common rooms as detestable? If such were the proctors, what

could the proproctors be? And did this same diversity of disciplinary notions descend to the bull-dogs? These and other similar perplexities were jostling one another in my thoughts, as we slowly made our way through the excited crowd.

Presently, cries of 'Winston! Winston!' rang through the air, followed by a chorus of groans and hootings, evidently not from townsmen's voices only.

'Brutes!' I heard Gordon muttering to himself, as he heard the unmistakable signs of the unpopularity of the man he so heartily honoured.

I turned and looked at him, and saw plainly that his lips were closely set, and his brows knit, and his whole countenance pale with dread and anger. He no longer tried to hold me back or restrain my impatience, but rather pulled me forwards, in his anxiety to reach the spot where he foresaw that Winston might be in personal danger. Partly through entreaties, and partly by violent pushing, we soon found ourselves on the very edge of a knot of undergraduates and townsmen engaged in a hand-to-hand fight. The gownsmen seemed overpowered in numbers, and my hands began to twitch with the desire to rush to their help. But Gordon dragged me past, and I was relieved to see that the cads were getting thrashed by the superior skill of hardy young fellows from public schools, where they had learned to hit out

straight, with a rapidity that astonished their heavier and slower adversaries. Two or three of the biggest of the townsmen were already 'biting the dust,' or rather rolling in the dirt, and I had no compunction in yielding to Gordon's entreaties, and pushing forward to Winston's help.

'Why, Gordon,' I could not help exclaiming, 'you seem as mad for the fight as any of these fellows can be.'

'It's not a question of fighting,' he replied. 'It's a question of safety for poor Winston, and of defence of the good cause itself. If those scoundrels once get him down, they won't leave him while the breath is in his body. And those infamous men of his own College won't lift a finger to save him. I know how savagely they hate him: and they're capable of any infamy to indulge their vile passions.'

By Jove, I thought to myself, as we elbowed our way onwards, this is something perfectly new. It's a sort of modern crusade I'm to be involved in. Only conceive my being called on to play champion to Church principles in the person of an unpopular proctor. If this sort of thing goes on long, every old idea in my head will be turned clean inside out. However, Gordon's too good a fellow to be left in the lurch in a scrape, even in a worse cause than these same Church principles, whatever they are.

Thus vaguely meditating, I spared no efforts to second Gordon in his eagerness to come to Winston's rescue; and in a minute or two we were within sight of what was going on. In the middle of the street a spot was kept clear, by a tacit agreement between the leaders on both sides, while a *bonâ fide* single combat was going on between a brawny giant, whom I had seen lounging about near the boat-houses, and an almost equally huge undergraduate. The windows and doors of the neighbouring houses were crowded with spectators, some of them loudly calling out for the intervention of the University and city police. The moonlight was still brilliant, and, with the lurid glare of the gas-lamps, brought out the features of the scene almost with the clearness of daytime.

Outside the limits of the ring thus formed we saw the figure of Winston himself, vainly striving to force himself through a line of mingled gownsmen and townsmen who were uniting to keep him back. They were plainly resolved on setting him at defiance, in order to see the fight between the two men well out. It was in vain that he remonstrated, and, as far as we could judge by his looks, threatened the gownsmen with all the penalties of University law. They turned their backs upon him, and left him to the mercy of the non-University rioters, one of whom struck him a blow in the back, which would

have brought him to the ground, but for the density of the crowd in which they were all packed.

In the meantime the contest between the two men in the ring was being conducted with all the passion and the forms of a regular fight. The big town giant fell backwards, as if shot, beneath a blow from his adversary, which he vainly strove to parry. Instantly he was picked up and placed upon the knee of one of his friends, while others bathed his face with water, and loud cheers rose from the gownsmen standing by. After a few moments the man was again on his legs, and the fight was on the point of beginning again, when Winston broke through the barrier that was holding him back, and placed his hand upon the young gownsman's shoulder. I could not hear what he said to him, but guessed its purport.

'Down with him! down with him!' shouted scores of voices on all sides. Others, less violent, contented themselves with calling out to him to clear off, and let the fight be fought out fairly. He stood his ground, however, unmoved; and as we had now succeeded in forcing ourselves within a few feet of the spot where he stood, we could hear him calling to the bull-dogs, who seemed to be close at hand, to come to his assistance.

But he called to no purpose, for they were instantly involved in a contest on their own account. The *mêlée* became general, though the chief animosity was against

the University authorities. Shouts and cries rent the air, varied with those unpleasant amenities of the English language, which display its coarse copiousness in all their fullest flavour, when the professed gentleman meets the professed cad on the equal ground of a free fight. I should certainly have very speedily made my way out of it, but that I felt bound in honour to stand by Gordon in his defence of Winston, if the zeal of the latter for College discipline, based upon Church principles, should lead him into personal peril.

And so it did, for Winston was all at once hustled by half a dozen dingy vagabonds, while the gownsmen who were at hand stood looking on, laughing and mocking at him. His cap was knocked off, his gown torn into pieces, and the hustling was quickly changing into more violent assaults.

'For heaven's sake come on,' cried Gordon to me, while he rushed forward into the midst of the scamps just as one of them struck Winston in the face, and made him stagger backwards.

'Cowards!' he shouted to them as he dashed up to Winston's side, and struck the fellow who had hit him with all the force of his strong arm. The fellow reeled, but he was instantly supported by another angry-looking brute with a cudgel in his hand, with which he hit Gordon upon the arm, and so far disabled him I was

by his side in a moment, and seizing the man's bludgeon with one hand, I grasped him by the neck with the other, tripping him up at the same time, and so hurling him to the ground. Turning then to Winston I saw him tottering beneath the blows that were showered on him, while Gordon with one arm was hopelessly continuing to strike in his defence. I scarcely felt the blows that fell upon myself, so fierce was the excitement; but the contest was too unequal to last, as not a hand was lifted in our defence. My legs were beginning to totter, and my head to swim, when a fresh outburst of cries reached our ears, and all at once the mob parted to the right and left, and the whole force of proproctors and city police made themselves masters of the situation.

A universal *sauve qui peut* soon cleared the street of all the more disreputable part of the throng, but I was not a little astonished when I was myself, with Gordon, detained as one of those who had broken the peace, and made myself liable to University penalties. Gordon's arm seemed to be broken, and he was led into a surgeon's house close at hand, though he protested that he was quite able to return at once to his college. As soon, however, as Winston himself was sufficiently recovered from the stupefying effects of the violence he had undergone, he made the state of the case clear to the others; and after desiring Gordon and myself to call

upon him the next morning, he went his way, and left us to go ours. Gordon's damage proved to be less than we had at first supposed. There was no fracture of the bones, but only a severe muscular contusion. All that was needful was quickly done for him, and I saw him safely to his rooms before I returned to my own.

I found a letter on my table addressed to me in my sister's handwriting. As I leisurely broke the seal—the modern envelope was not known in those days—I could not help smiling at the thoughts of what they would think at home when they came to hear of the scenes I had just quitted. How in the world, I thought to myself, shall I ever make the dear old father understand a town and gown row, conducted upon Church principles? And the picture of the little country church at home rose before me, as I had seen and studied it for many and many a year past. It was present to me, even while I read my sister's long and pleasant gossip about home affairs, with all their tender associations and soothing suggestions. I saw the humble, old building, a patchwork of every sort of Gothic and churchwardens' abomination that ever combined to complete that unique architectural monstrosity, an English village church. But it was venerable in my eyes nevertheless. The tall dingy pews; the grey stone monument, whereon were chronicled all the impossible virtues of a departed

squire; the singing gallery, wherein droned the clarionet, and the flute chirped, and the violoncello grumbled, every Sunday morning; the threefold pile of pulpit, reading desk, and clerk's desk; the torn and well-thumbed selection from Tate and Brady, which long served our purposes, while the modern hymn-book was not yet invented; the faded red cloth upon the Communion-table, guiltless of monogram, and of all ornament, save a poor yellow braiding; what was it to me that the æstheticism of the whole was dreadful? There I had learnt nearly all that I knew about right and wrong, and there I had at least tried to hold communion with that Invisible One of whom I had certainly never been afraid.

I threw myself into my easy-chair, and read my letter again, wondering more and more at the strangeness of the views of life which seemed to be now opening upon me, and shrouding all that was gone by in the mistiness of a vision. My father's theology was of the least 'viewy' kind conceivable. In fact, he had no 'views.' When I brought the word home, after my first term was over, he asked what it meant. To him there was something strange and inconceivable in the notion of an undergraduate's forming views, as I used the term. His own view of life was to do one's duty, and ask no questions that could not be easily answered; and now and

then he would shake his head and look grave when I showed signs of thinking for myself in religion and politics. He did not even like to hear the existing customs of the parish agriculture questioned. For two of the words then growing fashionable he had a special aversion, and was used to say that when a person began to talk about 'principle' or 'development' he was sure to begin talking nonsense.

What, I reflected, would such a simple, quiet, affectionate nature make of all this new life now kindling in Oxford? Supposing that I took Gordon home with me, what would they all think of him? Would not my father and mother alike look upon him as a silly, conceited youth—the victim of pernicious fanaticism? What would they say to his views about post-baptismal guilt? Would the knowledge of the spread of such notions in Oxford cause them more anger, or more sorrow? And, after all, was there not, to my own judgment, something monstrous and morbid in such a state of mind as that which Gordon had revealed to me? I had not the faintest sympathy with it, or with anything that he had said. And as for the application of Church principles on Baptism to the administration of University discipline, it seemed to me the very wildest of fancies.

And yet I was impressed. I could not have explained

how it was. But I certainly felt myself in the presence of something which was a reality. These people may be all wrong, I said to myself; indeed, they clearly are wrong, but they mean what they say, and they do something more than indulge themselves in talking about God. Thus I sat and pondered, till I could think no more for sheer weariness and bodily fatigue.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN my scout came into my bedroom and woke me on the following morning, the events of the evening appeared to be as visionary as those of a dream lately ended. I was so tired, indeed, that I fell asleep again, and for the first time since I had come up, was not in time for morning chapel. It was the rule at St Bede's that every undergraduate should attend chapel six times during the six week-days, but he was not bound to attend on each day of the week. He might attend either morning or evening every day, or he might even make up the six attendances by coming twice a day for three days, staying away altogether during the other three. In point of fact, there was a set of idle men who almost invariably indulged themselves by keeping away every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and made up for their indolence by doing special violence to their inclinations, and coming twice on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

As I now look back, I can see clearly that this strange regulation about chapel-going was the cause of the first elements of distrust which made a lodgment in my

mind. At the time, I merely thought it odd, so far as my criticisms on College ways took any formal shape. It was like saying one's prayers twice over at night, when one had omitted to say them in the morning, remarked a man of my own standing, himself notorious for the irregularities of his chapel-going. And really the censure was not unfair. Certainly the regulation had a manifest air of sham about it. If daily prayer was a good thing, it ought to have been enforced daily, if enforced at all. But as for the notion of doubling the amount of praying on some days, in order to make up for its total neglect on others, the rule was clearly founded on a misconception of the nature of devotion, which only made it contemptible in the eyes of heedless or ill-principled young men.

I did not, indeed, at that time venture to question the propriety of compelling attendance at chapel in the case of every resident undergraduate. But seeing, as I did, the spirit in which the majority actually attended, I am satisfied that this compulsory chapel-going was one of the unsettling influences of the Oxford of the day, which helped to render me in the end utterly dissatisfied with the Church of England as an institution, and convinced me that if the Church of Christ existed anywhere in the world, the Anglican communion had ceased to be a living part of it.

As for myself, I never disliked the chapel services; nor, I think, did I ever feel that the necessity for attending them was an irksome burden. But at the same time, or rather, for this very reason, the demeanour of many of the undergraduates was distasteful to me. We were fortunate at St Bede's in the manner in which the prayers were read, and the traditional scandals of gabbled services were unknown. Nevertheless, as representing the existing religious discipline of the University, these obligatory attendances were specially adapted to prepare seriously-disposed youths to listen to the claims of any new theology that loudly proclaimed the spiritual degeneracy of the day. The results of the compulsory chapel-going of forty years ago were a standing proof of the assertion of the new Tractarian school, that we had fallen away from the piety of our fathers, and that what the Church wanted was the revival of the holy fear and severe discipline of primitive days.

Argumentatively, of course, they proved nothing of the kind. But in the young and impressible mind, which knew no alternative between existing laxity and patristic rigour, these cold morning and evening services, at which a crowd of unwilling youngsters lounged on their elbows, without even a pretence at hiding their dislike of the whole proceeding, could not fail to awaken a sense of disenchantment, which must eventually tell powerfully

upon all religious convictions. I do not doubt that it was largely owing to that irreverent tone in the chapel prayers of the time which is inseparable from services which young men are compelled to attend, in the very first years of their newly found independence of action, that the urgency with which the Tractarian school insisted upon daily prayers was felt so forcibly by so many persons.

The idea may sound paradoxical, but in truth it is the reverse. Unquestionably, there was something which appealed to every man's sense of duty and loyalty to the Church, in the Tractarian theory that, by the rubrics of the Prayer-book, every clergyman was bound to say the morning and evening prayers in his parish church. With the adherents of this school these daily prayers were made a vivid reality. They taught people to come to church from religious motives, and their services were at any rate grave and earnest. The very peculiarities of manner which these services often exhibited were so many tokens of the profound earnestness which they carried into them.

At the College services, on the contrary, here were these same services daily repeated in the presence of a crowd of forced attendants, for to call them congregations or worshippers would be absurd, who flung themselves into their seats, scarcely awake from their long prolonged

slumbers, or heated with the fumes of the wine which they had left much against the grain upon the table of some friend. Here was the devotional system of the Church of England as it was, while the new school exhibited the system of the Church of England as it ought to be. Who can wonder that, with such contrasts before the eyes of the undergraduates, bachelors, and masters also, the doctrines of the new school should be associated with ideas of living faith and piety, while those of the nineteenth century Establishment suggested a frigid, faithless formalism?

And I am none the less satisfied that this was the effect of the old compulsory system, because I never, in my own case, could see the force of the argument in favour of daily church prayers, drawn from the injunctions of the rubric. To my mind these rubrical injunctions were to be interpreted by the living authorities of the time. I never believed in institutions, apart from the living men who embodied them. It was the same with signature to the Thirty-nine Articles and the promise to obey the University Statutes. In those days every undergraduate signed the Articles when he matriculated, and a ridiculous farce it was with many who thus signed and promised. But with myself it was no farce at all, and yet it was no difficulty at all. Though I had never heard anything of the theory of the *animus*

imponentis, the principle which the words embody always seemed to me to be obviously true. I never conceived of human society as being held together by any other authority than that of the living human beings themselves, who from time to time succeed to the generations dying away. For this reason, these rubrical arguments were always without effect upon me; and to the last, I considered that the question of daily services is simply one of practical expediency and nothing more.

At the same time, as my term of residence at Oxford went on, I felt the contrast between the practice of the new High Church school and that of the existing Establishment school, as witnessed in the College chapels. It fostered the suspicions created by other causes, that here at any rate was to be found no realisation of my ideal of a perfect Church, such as I believed to have been set up by Jesus Christ upon earth. It was just one of those characteristics of Oxford and Oxford life which suggested the existence of a bygone epoch, when those things which were now become hollow forms were the results of an intensely real vitality.

On this same morning, as I have said, I was too late, for the first time, for chapel, and as I dressed I could not help looking forward to evening chapel with a sort of languid curiosity, wondering how the men would look

whom I had often seen hurrying away from a wine party to their enforced devotions. All other thoughts, however, were soon absorbed in the recollection that I had to pay a visit to the proctor, and to give an account of myself for my participation in the riot of the preceding night. Of course I knew that the moment I should make it clear that I had fought on the side of order, and had been one of his own champions, I should come off with flying colours. But still, for a steady reading man, who rather plumed himself upon his avoidance of everything fast or disreputable, it was a nervous thing to enter a proctor's rooms on such an errand.

Before going I called upon Gordon, expecting him to bear me company, especially as I knew that he was personally acquainted with Winston, so that I should make my appearance under his protecting wing. But he was too ill to leave his bed, and had already sent his message of apology to Gloucester College, of which Winston was a fellow. So I wended my way alone.

Some half-dozen others had preceded me; and as I went in Winston was in the act of dismissing them, with what measure of reproof or punishment I did not know. They looked crestfallen, though one or two of them seemed putting on an air of bravado, as if resolved to prove that they cared for nothing that a proctor could inflict.

'Mr Seymour, of St Bede's, I believe?' said Winston to me as soon as we were alone.

'Yes, sir,' I replied.

He was a rather tall spare man, with pale countenance, by no means ill-looking, but, to my judgment, almost painfully grave in manner and expression. I had always been struck by his looks whenever I had chanced to see him, either in St Mary's or elsewhere. There was in his face a mixture of preoccupation and of anxious attention to the business he was engaged in, which at once repelled and attracted me. It repelled me because it was unintelligible. I could hardly understand the condition of mind which it indicated; it implied that singular absence of interest in present affairs which is so incomprehensible to the young, when they are full of eager hope and enjoyment themselves; and yet I was affected by its extreme sincerity and seriousness, and the resolute energy of every feature. Whatever Winston did, it was clear that whatever was his real interest in it, he was resolved to do it with all his might, and that, as he loved no half measures for others, he practised no half measures in the government of himself.

He now looked me full in the face, with that strange gaze of his, as if he would read me through and through, at the same time that his mind seemed fixed upon some other object of absorbing interest. I suppose that I

must have shown signs of feeling decidedly uncomfortable under his gaze, for he presently bade me sit down in a tone more cordial than was common in an Oxford Don, and still more in a proctor when addressing an undergraduate.

'It was necessary, Mr Seymour,' he began, 'that I should require your attendance this morning on account of the painful events of last night, but I trust that in your case it may prove but a mere formality.'

'I assure you, sir,'— I began; but he interrupted me with a wave of his hand.

'Be good enough to tell me how you came to be in the Cornmarket at the hour when I saw you, or rather when you did me such good service. That service I should be the last to overlook or undervalue, but it is my duty to inquire how you came to be so far from your College at such an hour, and how you came to be in the thick of the rioters at all?'

I was not prepared to be thus questioned, having entertained the belief that I should be immediately welcomed as the zealous supporter of University discipline. But I had nothing to conceal, and told the whole story of my evening occupations, in general outline, without entering upon the special talk I had had with Gordon.

'And you are able to say, Mr Seymour,' said Winston

when I had ended, 'that you were perfectly sober when you left Mr Hawkstone's rooms?'

'Perfectly, sir,' I replied positively.

'You would have done better,' he replied, 'if you had gone direct to your College, when a serious disturbance was expected. If you had done this, you would have been out of the way of temptation. You understand that it is my duty to regard your conduct solely as it was your own, and without reference to the assistance which you were enabled to render to me.'

'Neither Mr Gordon nor myself had the remotest notion of there being any row coming on,' I replied.

'In the absence of Mr Gordon,' he rejoined, 'I do not quite like to ask you to account for his being found in your company, joining a riot, even out of curiosity like yourself. I have some little personal knowledge of him, and I should have thought him the last young man in Oxford to care for such disreputable sights.'

'I never saw him in my life, sir,' I eagerly replied, 'before last night; but I could swear that he would never do anything except from the highest motives.'

'There is no need for such forcible language, Mr Seymour,' replied Winston, gently raising his hand in a deprecating manner. 'I have no doubt that Mr Gordon will be able to give me a satisfactory explanation of his conduct when he is recovered.'

'No, sir,' I exclaimed, suddenly resolving that I would let Winston know the truth, which I felt sure that Gordon would never tell; 'he will not tell you the real state of the case. He did all he could to stop me from coming; and it was only because he thought you yourself would be in personal danger that he made his way through the mob, and brought me with him. I believe you probably owe your life to him.'

A sudden flush suffused Winston's pale features as I said this, and his lips quivered with a look of intense feeling. But he put his hand before his eyes, and leant forwards, and for a minute or two said nothing more.

'I have the greatest dislike, Mr Seymour,' he then said, sitting up and uncovering his face, 'to betray emotions of any unusual kind, but it is so rare a thing for anyone in these days to be made the object of such loyal attachment as you speak of, that I was for the moment scarcely my own master. It is a thing to be most thankful for, to know that one's efforts at restoring the ancient Church system are not altogether thrown away. I owe you also very much indeed.'

'Well, sir,' I replied, 'I don't understand anything about that; but of course, when those blackguards were setting upon you, and not a gownsman would lend a hand, when it was one man against a dozen, it was impossible to stand by and do nothing.'

He smiled a sort of half sympathetic smile, as he replied.

'Nevertheless, Mr Seymour, there is no real foundation for the discipline of a Christian University, except by the recognition of those principles which were once the life of penitent Christians, and which have so unhappily been forgotten in our days. You surely are aware that in the early and happy days of the Church there existed a rigorous discipline, far different from that grievous laxness which now prevails.'

'You mean, sir,' said I, 'in the days of Henry VIII., or Queen Elizabeth, and before those rascally Puritans got the upper hand in the country.'

'Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth!' echoed Winston, looking as much aghast as if I had been proposing to pick the vice-chancellor's pocket, or to set up rat-hunting in Gloucester College gardens.

'Those were the early days of the Church,' I rejoined, 'were not they, sir?' all the views which I had been hearing from Gordon being clean gone out of my mind, and the old Church-of-England Protestantism of my boyhood fairly reinstated in their place.

'No, Mr Seymour,' replied Winston, 'those were not the early days of the Church. They were the days when unhappily we were compelled to repudiate the corruptions which the Roman branch of the Catholic Church

had introduced into the simplicity of primitive doctrine. But they were not the happiest days of our own branch. I was speaking of those ancient times when the Apostolic traditions were still cherished by the Fathers of the Church; and all alike had but one rule of faith; the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.* You have perhaps never read the famous essay in which St Vincent of Lerins expounds this golden maxim at full length.'

I confessed my ignorance of that important treatise.

'Ah, well!' he said; 'it does not as yet form any portion of our University studies; but it is never too early to begin to lay the foundations of our faith deep and sure; and as it is a book whose main principle has been adopted by all the sound divines of our Anglican Church, I think you might study it with much profit.'

As he spoke he rose, went to his book-case, and taking from it a small volume, placed it in my hands. I read the title on the back—*Vincentii Lirinensis Commonitorium.*

'You will do me the favour to accept it,' he continued, 'in memory of the good service you did last night to the cause of which I am only a poor representative.'

I confess that I did not care very much for the *Commonitorium* of this unknown saint whose name I

had never seen in the Prayer-book; but I was vastly gratified, nevertheless, and so I said.

'Will you breakfast with me to-morrow, Mr Seymour?' Winston answered. 'Ah, no!' he continued, 'I forgot. To-morrow is Friday, and of course you will not be going out. But on Saturday, if you are disengaged.'

I expressed the pleasure with which I accepted the invitation, and he then dismissed me with a friendly shake of the hand. And so I went back to my rooms, on the whole somewhat elated, but with new elements of bewilderment lodged in my mind. Here were three fresh notions presented to me as actual realities, which I could in no way fit into my existing system of thought on such matters. What could possibly be the meaning of this *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,* which I was told to regard as the solid foundation of my religious faith? I had never heard of such a thing before. As young men go, I believed myself a pretty fairly instructed Christian; but if so, why had my father taught me nothing about this same *Vincentius Lirinensis,* and his *Commonitorium?* I was well up in Paley already, and was taking kindly to Butler; but was there anything akin to this *Commonitorium* in Paley? The two must surely breathe a totally different moral and intellectual atmosphere.

Then I had heard it assumed that certain divines were sound; and by implication, that other divines were unsound. What could this mean? I had been used to think that all Church divines were sound, and all others unsound; and so my old habits of thinking about truths and untruths must be presumed to be altogether a mistake. And what, on this new hypothesis, constituted soundness and unsoundness? I had come up to Oxford to take my degree, and get a good class, if possible, and I intended afterwards to go into the Church; and now here was one of the chief University authorities sending all my thoughts astray in a totally new direction.

Most wonderful of all, it was assumed that I never went out to breakfast on Fridays. It might just as well have been assumed that I never went to church on Sundays. Why should I not go out to breakfast on Fridays? I had learnt that Gordon and the followers of this new school followed certain rules about fasting, which they called obeying the Church. But what was their exact practice I did not know. Was I a bad Churchman then, and were we all at home bad Church people, because we did just the same on Fridays that we did on other days? When I came to think of it, I remembered that we did have salt-fish and egg-sauce for dinner on Ash-Wednesday, and my mother used to say

that in her young days many people put on mourning in Lent. Evidently there must be some hidden connection between the old and the new customs, though I could not see it, except that both alike seemed equally unreasonable. There was no more sense in staying in one's rooms on Fridays than in eating salt-fish and egg-sauce on Ash-Wednesday, and in putting on black clothes until Easter-day. On the whole, I could make nothing of it. Only it seemed so singular to see all these strange modes of thought accepted as principles of action literally before my eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day I had just finished the moderate luncheon with which we satisfied ourselves in those days, when, scarcely waiting for me to reply to his vigorous knock at my door, in rushed North, and threw himself into an easy-chair.

'What's all this I hear,' he exclaimed, 'about your getting into the row the other night, and finding yourself quietly proctorised for your pains? Why, my dear fellow, you are about the last man in St Bede's that I should have suspected of a love for fighting in the streets.'

I told him the whole story, suppressing, of course, my conversation with Gordon, and a good deal of what Winston had said. He could scarcely contain himself for laughter, but then suddenly grew grave again.

'I'll tell you what it is,' he began; 'there is a good deal to be said for the sincerity of these fellows, like Gordon and Winston and the rest of them; but in my opinion they are doing an infinite deal of harm to Oxford. And to say the honest truth, I'm not glad to

hear that Winston has asked you to breakfast. If you once get mixed up with that clique, there's an end to your success in the schools.'

'I don't see that in the least,' I said. 'In the first place, I don't intend to get mixed up with any clique at all; and in the second place, I can't understand how success in the schools can have anything to do with the question.'

'The whole thing is a mistake,' rejoined he. 'A man doesn't come up to Oxford to plunge into a heap of senseless theological speculations; but to work. If he cares nothing for reading, that's his own affair. But for men who do want to work, and to whom it's a matter of serious importance to take a good degree, as it is to you and me, it's a positive upsetting of everything to have the healthy intellectual life of the place interfered with by these foolish fanaticisms.'

'Why, North,' I exclaimed, 'I never heard you let out so fiercely before; I had a notion that you rather honoured the very men you're now abusing.'

'I honour their sincerity and their self-denial,' he replied; 'and I enjoy seeing them scarify the puritanical set, who have all the disagreeable intrusiveness of these new lights, without their brains or self-sacrifice. But I detest all religious polemics. There'll soon be no such thing as a quiet life for a fellow like me who takes no

interest in all these senseless word-splittings and childish austerities.'

'But surely,' said I, 'they are something more than that.'

'And then the solemn positiveness,' he went on, 'with which a man like Winston, who's not a fool, can talk to you about his sound divines! That's the fashionable theory, now, I suppose. Why, here have I been put into this new Articles lecture—and a more utter waste of time I can't conceive—and Dodds tells us to get up Burnet on the Articles. Then somebody else, one of Winston's shining lights, I see, has been printing his opinion that Burnet is not sound. What a quibbling it is about names and phrases!'

'Then you don't believe in the distinction between soundness and unsoundness?' I suggested. 'In truth the distinction is new to me.'

'All I know about the matter is what Cowper says—

> "Oh! why were farmers made so coarse,
> And clergy made so fine?
> A kick that scarce would move a horse
> Will kill a sound divine."

But I take it Cowper simply meant a parson, and that's all. I am tired of the whole thing. And where's the test of soundness? I should be glad to know. One knows what constitutes unsoundness in a horse; any

vet. can tell you that; spavin, windgalls, roaring, stringhalt, and a dozen other defects; here are things that can be brought to a test. But who is to say what constitutes unsoundness in a divine? How rational men can spend their days in disputing about such verbal quibbles as we are questioned about in this Articles lecture, is more than I can conceive. I've quite come round to Arlington's view of the Articles. He calls them forty stripes save one.'

'Who is Arlington?' I asked.

'What! haven't you met Arlington?' rejoined North.

'Why he is the *enfant terrible* of the Tracts people. He took his degree about a year ago, and now stays up, doing nothing, infinitely to the disgust of his own party. He declares that he himself is the only consistent man in the whole set; but everybody sees that his chief delight is to make people stare.'

'This Articles lecture is rather a new thing, is it not?' I asked him.

'Yes,' said North; 'I believe it's a device of our dons to counteract the teaching of the Tracts. They think that it's only because undergraduates are not well instructed in the real Church of England religion, that so many of them are imposed upon by this last new creed, or whatever it is. And so, by way of exhibiting to our innocent minds the real, old, original thing, we are to

contemplate its perfections as exhibited in the profound intelligence and as expounded by the silver tongue of the Reverend Onesimus Dodds, of all men in the whole world.'

And, indeed, when I came to understand people's characters better, and had been myself subjected to the same process from which North was now suffering, I was struck with the singular want of knowledge of the undergraduate mind, which was betrayed by the master of the College when he appointed a man like Dodds to such an office. There are many such persons in Oxford at all times. They are the special creation of a university; where the teachers have to 'get up' great subjects with a sort of pretended completeness, while they are naturally disqualified for all profound and dispassionate thought.

Dodds was emphatically a man whose mind was made up of pigeon-holes. He would take any number of opinions on theological or philosophical subjects and stow them away in his memory, unconscious as to their utter inconsistency with one another, provided only it seemed the right thing, under the circumstances, to accept them. And there he kept them, ready for use, like so many letters, or bills, or documents, stowed away, correctly docketed, in a business man's desk or cabinet. Nothing could be more comfortable than the arrange-

ment, at least for Dodds himself, for his views no more meddled with one another than do the said pigeon-holed papers. He himself used to say that it was every clergyman's duty to keep his mind as well as his person, in what he called a neat, a tidy, and, as it were, well-brushed condition. And as was his own serene, and smooth, and dapper countenance, such was his intelligence. His hair, his eyebrows, his whiskers, his white tie, and his whole dress, down to his very boots, were, each in their kind, without a fault. That such a man should ever cease to be a College Fellow, and be subjected to the disturbing influences of a wife and children, seemed an idea too impossible even to be contemplated.

Upon men like North the influence of theological instruction given by a tutor like Dodds, could only have been unfortunate. And North was a fair representative of a very large number of minds, both in Oxford and elsewhere. For theology, as a body of religious doctrines, many of them of a highly recondite character, he had absolutely no inclination whatever. Rather, I should say, he had a positive distaste for it. The propositions in which doctrines are drawn up conveyed to his thoughts the most shadowy of conceptions; and it was difficult to make him believe that any rational person could regard them as anything more than dead conventionalities of speech.

The extent to which this distaste, or inability, exists among men in general, is, I am convinced, very largely underrated. At the same time, its influence in determining the relation of the laity towards the English Church in contrast with the feelings of the laity in Roman Catholic countries, is very great indeed. For there is all the difference in the world between a capacity for taking an interest in religion, as a matter of practical action and emotion, and a capacity for taking an interest in a series of theological propositions, bound together by necessary links, and resting upon a historical and controversial basis. All men are capable of being religious, but few persons are capable of being theologians. The theological faculty is like the musical faculty, or the artistic faculty, or the mathematical, or the mechanical faculty. Like every other natural gift, it may exist in a greater or a less degree; but for a man to take any real interest in theology, he must possess originally some share of that natural proclivity and capacity for the study, without which he will never get beyond mere efforts of memory, in committing to heart the technicalities of other thinkers.

And this is one chief reason why the religious talk of the majority of those who insist upon thus talking, is a mere conventional repetition of phrases. So it is, also, with the writings of so many who have embraced the

ministerial profession. They may be excellent and active clergymen; but unless they possess the theological instinct, they will never be theologians; and it is unreasonable to expect anything more from them than a forced and verbal repetition of recognised phraseologies.

Few things, therefore, can be more disastrous in their effects upon the minds of young men, at the ordinary undergraduate age, than lectures such as those with which the Rev. Onesimus Dodds sought to counteract the fascinations of the school of the Tracts for the Times. They had the one sole effect of making the men at St Bede's dissatisfied with theology altogether, and especially as embodied in the standards of the Church of England. Of course, I did not see all this as clearly at the time as I see it now. But I know that I felt much more than I said or understood; and that what in myself were only the preliminary stages of a total change of religious convictions, were in many others the decisively rapid movements of minds more ecclesiastically disposed than my own. Men like North learnt to associate the whole conception of doctrinal belief with unreal subtleties and senseless forms; while to others the new development of High Church theology presented itself with all the charms of historic grandeur and scientific completeness.

North's account of Dodds' last lecture, which he proceeded to give me as soon as he had done discussing

the position of Arlington and his passion for *éclat*, caused my first real suspicions that all was not right in the Anglicanism in which I had been brought up.

'I assure you,' he said, 'that my head still actually aches with my tremendous efforts to remember the stream of words that man poured forth this morning.'

'Why, what was it all about?' I asked.

'That's more than I can tell you,' he replied. 'All I know is, that he was giving a list of everything that the Church of England protested against.'

'I thought she protested against the Pope,' I interposed; 'and that was why we are Protestants.'

'Not a bit of it, my dear fellow,' said North; 'we protest against a hundred other people besides whom I never heard of. We protest against Nestorians, and Eutychians, and Monothelites, and Monophysites, and Sublapsarians, and Supralapsarians, and Patripassians, and I know not how many more. And this was all because some inquisitive fellow asked Dodds what was meant by the ultra-Protestantism which he had heard denounced last Sunday at St Mary's. What on earth is the difference between Protestantism and ultra-Protestantism I cannot conceive. A man's either a Catholic or a Protestant. However, this would not do for Dodds; so out he came with a long string of proofs that the Tracts people are all wrong, because the Church of

England protests against everything that is false, and upholds everything that is true.'

'I did not know that Dodds liked men to ask questions during lecture,' I said.

'On the contrary,' replied North, 'there's nothing he likes so well; for he is ready with his answer pat for everything. But he got more than he bargained for this morning, I suspect.'

'Is that possible?' I asked.

'Indeed it is,' said North. 'You know that intolerable fellow Wilkinson, whose one passion is to force every man to eat his own words, and to show him that he can't reason correctly. Well, I saw him fidgetting about on his chair, and watching for his opportunity.'

'But, sir,' he at last broke in, 'does the Church protest against the Apostolical succession of the clergy?'

'What can you possibly mean, Mr Wilkinson?' exclaimed Dodds, looking quite aghast. 'Do you not know that it is with that very doctrine that she protests against Dissent, as well as against the corruptions of Rome?'

'But what is the particular good of the Apostolical succession, sir?' continued the unblushing Wilkinson.

'Mr Wilkinson,' cried Dodds, 'you really forget that you are a Churchman. Do you not remember that when a Bishop ordains a priest, according to our vener-

able Ordination Service, he confers on him the gift of the Holy Ghost?'

'Is that a Protestant doctrine, sir?' asked Wilkinson, putting on the most innocent of looks; 'or is it an ultra-Protestant doctrine?'

'It is not a Protestant doctrine at all,' rejoined Dodds. 'It is an ancient Catholic doctrine, by which the Church is distinguished from Dissent on the one side, and from Rome on the other.'

'Then, sir, the Church of England alone is right in all things?' inquired Wilkinson.

'In all things, Mr Wilkinson,' rejoined Dodds, as if there could be no possibility of doubt as to the matter.

'How should you define Orders, sir?' Wilkinson went on.

'Orders; Mr Wilkinson!' echoed Dodds. 'What does the Article say about it?'

'That is just what I cannot understand, sir,' said Wilkinson; while we all of us could hardly keep our countenances, and wondered at his unblushing coolness. 'The Article says,' he went on, 'that the five Romish Sacraments are such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures.'

'Very well, Mr Wilkinson,' said Dodds, 'is not that clear enough for any reasonable mind?'

'May I ask, sir,' Wilkinson rejoined, 'whether it is meant that each one of these five is partly one thing and partly another, or that some of them have come from a corrupt following of the Apostles, and some of them are states of life allowed in the Scriptures? Also, might I say that I do not see how one could follow the Apostles corruptly. I should have thought that the corruptness would be the consequence of not following them. Does the Article mean that the Apostles led in the wrong direction, and the Church of Rome has become corrupt by following them in their errors?'

As he thus went on, Dodds' face grew scarlet, and he seemed almost to pant for breath with sheer amazement.

'Mr Wilkinson,' he at last broke out; 'the tone of your remarks is in the highest degree irreverent. Are you aware that you are insinuating the most disparaging things against some of the greatest and best men whom the world has ever seen? Have you no reverence for the Fathers of our Church, who sealed their faith with their blood, in defence of that purity of doctrine which had been overlaid by the corruptions of Rome?'

But Wilkinson was not to be silenced, even by the frowns of his own College tutor, while the manifest looks of enjoyment with which the rest of the men watched this baiting of Dodds, whom nobody liked, instigated him to still further audacity.

'But what am I to do, sir,' he resumed, 'when I go up for my examination for my degree, and when I am examined for Ordination? If I am asked to explain this Article, what am I to say?'

'Say, Mr Wilkinson!' cried Dodds,—'say that it is designed as a protest against the corruptions of the idolatrous Church of Rome. Yes; idolatrous, I make bold to say; as it is the more necessary to speak the truth concerning that fallen Communion, because of the tendencies now unhappily rife in this University itself.'

'Do you think it likely, sir,' replied Wilkinson, still refusing to be put down; 'that the compilers of this Article had not quite made up their minds on these subjects, or that they intentionally expressed themselves in a vague manner, in order to comprehend both parties in the Church?'

'I cannot entertain either supposition,' replied Dodds.

'Why, sir,' said Wilkinson, 'it seems to me that this Article either has no meaning at all, or that its words are meant to be, what I may call, stretched.'

'Stretched!' cried Dodds; 'your language is most irreverent; and I cannot permit it.'

'I withdraw the term, sir, then,' said Wilkinson, 'in deference to your wishes. But perhaps you will explain to me what I first of all was in doubt about. Is Orders

a corrupt following of the Apostles, or is it a state of life allowed in the Scriptures?'

'It is both of the two,' retorted Dodds; 'that is, it is a state of life, and it is a pure, and not a corrupt following of the Apostles.'

'May I ask, sir,' asked Wilkinson, 'how we should define a state of life? For instance, in what sense is Confirmation a state of life, and Orders a state of life?'

'That is a question which will never be asked you in the schools,' rejoined Dodds; 'such refinements are quibbles, and to be avoided.'

'Is Orders, then, a state?' persisted Wilkinson.

'Certainly it is,' said Dodds.

'Is it nothing more, sir?' inquired Wilkinson, with an assumption of the most guileless innocence.

'Undoubtedly it is, Mr Wilkinson,' rejoined Dodds. 'It is an Apostolic institution.'

'But what sort of institution is it, sir?' said Wilkinson; 'I mean, what is it? Can a man once ordained ever cease to be what he is thus made?'

'Never!' exclaimed Dodds; 'it is a maxim of our reformed Church that Orders are indelible.'

'What makes them so, sir?' asked Wilkinson.

'The grace of the Holy Ghost,' replied Dodds after a few moments' consideration.

'Conferred, I presume, by the imposition of the Bishop's hands,' said Wilkinson.

'Unquestionably,' exclaimed Dodds triumphantly.

'Did the Apostles invent Orders, sir,' asked Wilkinson.

'The supposition is perfectly shocking,' exclaimed Dodds. 'They communicated to others the gift which the Divine Founder of our religion communicated to them.'

'Who invented the laying on of hands, sir?' asked Wilkinson.

'Invented! Mr Wilkinson; the terms you use are most grievously frivolous, not to say flippant. The Apostles were inspired in all that they did for the founding of the Church.'

'But, sir,' persisted Wilkinson, 'the Article says that God did not ordain any visible sign or ceremony for the institution of Orders. Is not the laying on of hands a visible sign or ceremony? Of course, then, the Apostles were not then inspired.'

'I repeat, Mr Wilkinson,' Dodds answered, with growing anger, 'that you are treating a most solemn subject with a carping spirit most unbecoming your years. I repeat to you once more that the Articles are to be construed in the spirit of the great and good men who compiled them. They are, after all, human compositions,

and therefore liable to verbal perversion on the part of those who do not receive them in the true filial spirit of a devout son of our own pure and Apostolic Church. The fault is not in the Articles themselves, but in those who thus trust in their own ignorance and conceit. Yes, Mr Wilkinson,' added Dodds, impressively closing his book, 'I must call it ignorance and conceit.'

And with that he sent us all away.

CHAPTER IV.

SATURDAY morning arrived, and I presented myself in Winston's rooms at nine o'clock, much wondering who would be there, and considerably alarmed at the thought of the possibility of a *tête-à-tête* with a proctor, especially one who was distinguished for opinions of such unheard-of austerity. I only hoped that he would not question me as to the progress I had made with the *Commonitorium* of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, as I should have had to confess that as yet I had only glanced at it, and did not feel particularly eager to make myself acquainted with the application of the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* to my personal religious beliefs.

I found at once that the breakfast-party would be only one degree less formidable than *tête-à-tête*, inasmuch as the only other guest was to be a don of the same College, Yorke by name, to whom Winston immediately introduced me.

'I had asked two or three more of your own standing, Mr Seymour,' he said, 'but unfortunately they were all of them either engaged or unwell. But Mr Yorke con-

siders himself still a young man, though he is nearly as old as I am myself.'

'Yes, Mr Seymour,' Yorke began; 'this is one of the various happy results of our Catholic system, when rightly understood.'

He was a short, sprightly little man, with a quick, pleasant way of speaking, and I listened with no slight curiosity to this new aspect of Church principles which I felt sure he was about to make clear to me.

'The Church, in fact,' he continued, 'supplies the only safe development of the democratic idea of universal equality. It keeps us middle-aged men quite young in heart and spirits, and it prevents the old from getting weary of life and as stiff in their minds as they are in their bones. Indeed, I should not be surprised if the Church system tended to an almost perennial elasticity, if cultivated without hindrance from this wretched Protestant Puritanism which has banished all joy from the country. Think of the sanitary effects of a true Catholic Sunday as compared with the gloom of Scotch Presbyterianism.'

As he spoke, we sat down to table, and Yorke immediately filled my plate with a bountiful supply of cold chicken and ham.

'This seems quite another view of Church principles,' I thought to myself. 'Does Winston approve of this

sort of thing?' I silently pondered. He did not leave me long in doubt, for while Yorke was still busy in helping both himself and his host, Winston gravely observed that he could not wish to see the gaieties of another system revived without at the same time a revival of the discipline of the primitive Church.

'In theory I quite go with you,' replied Yorke, pausing in the act of lifting a slice of ham to his mouth; 'but then you know we must take what we can get. And what we should especially aim at is the introduction of a little more poetry into the religious life of our own Church. The prosaic character of Anglicanism is to me perfectly intolerable. Have you ever been abroad, Mr Seymour?' he added, turning sharply round to me.

'Never, sir,' I replied.

'Ah!' he went on, after refreshing himself with at least half a cup of coffee, 'then you have not yet seen what even our Anglican branch is capable of in the way of poetic beauty.'

'Why, Yorke,' Winston interposed, 'our English chapels on the Continent are the very type of our laxity at home.'

'Undoubtedly so,' returned Yorke; 'and for that reason I make it a point never to attend them. I was speaking of the Roman services. It is to them we ought to look for suggestions as to the best mode of

un-Protestantising our matins and evensong at home. They have a service in France which is called the "*Salut*," which is poetry itself. It is called "Benediction" here, I believe. The *ensemble* is perfect; quite of an ideal beauty; all the people kneeling and singing, and then relapsing into dead silence, while clouds of incense rise with an exquisite odour, and the priest holds up the Host, and a bell tinkles. You can't conceive how charmingly expressive it is of the devotional idea. But I confess I don't quite see how it could be modified to suit our English customs.'

'Don't you think that the subject is a little too awful for our present occupation!' Winston suggested, evidently not pleased at the ease with which Yorke uttered words which he himself would not employ without lowering his voice and almost bowing his head.

'There's undoubtedly a time for all things,' replied Yorke; 'but still, as I have said, I think it is better to err on the side of brightness and cheerfulness than on that of puritanical gloom.'

'I cannot, however, forget the grievous errors and corruption of our Roman sister,' said Winston. 'It is her duty to put on sackcloth and ashes as much as it is ours. I fear that she has fallen from the ancient standard as grievously as ourselves.'

'But they keep up the practice of confession,' said Yorke.

'Precisely so,' said Winston, 'in name and form. But I am given to understand that it is a mere device for making the practice of penance an easy task, or, rather, no task at all.'

'Of course, I'm in favour of confession,' replied Yorke; 'but I should say that the mere act of going to confession is sufficient penance in itself.'

'My dear Yorke,' interrupted Winston, 'pardon me if I say that I think you have hardly realised the views of the Fathers on this whole class of subjects. From all that I hear of Roman popular religion, I fear that it is infected with that same familiarity and irreverence which is to be witnessed among ourselves.'

'There's a great deal in what you say, no doubt,' replied Yorke, 'but still they have the poetic and the æsthetic idea, and we have almost lost it; while these miserable Low Churchmen positively detest it.'

'I very much question whether St Augustine, or St Ambrose, or St Athanasius, cared seriously for the poetic and the æsthetic ideas,' remarked Winston.

'Yes,' said Yorke, 'that may be so. But then they were influenced by their dread of the old Paganism.' Then, turning to me, he asked if there was much doing in my neighbourhood in the way of Church restoration.

I said that I had not heard of anything of the kind.

'Let us hope for better things,' he answered. 'As for

myself, I confess that the ordinary English village church is the most depressing of sights in the whole world. Only conceive such a dereliction of the sacramental principle as the placing of the font within the altar rails! What must be the practical teaching with respect to baptism, when the whole symbolism of the Church is thus treated with contempt?'

I reflected that this was the very position of the font in my father's church; but I did not dare to say anything.

'Are you interested in the question of symbolism, Mr Seymour?' continued Yorke. 'It is a subject which seems to have much attraction for undergraduates, judging from the proceedings of our Architectural Society.'

'Not very much, sir,' I answered, afraid that he would think me lamentably wanting in good feeling.

'Ah, well!' he replied, 'it will come, it will come. For myself, I look to the symbolism of the Church as the most efficient instrument for converting the whole nation.'

'Symbolism,' here observed Winston, 'is no doubt an admirable mode for expressing truths already realised; but I am disposed to lay more stress upon the teaching ancient truth itself, as the means for awakening the national conscience.'

'Still,' said Yorke, 'we must do what we can; and with the innumerable monuments of the ages of faith scattered all over the land, we have only to call people's attention to their hidden significance, and the work is half done.' Then, again addressing me, he added, 'Is there any movement going on in your parts for the study of brasses, Mr Seymour? Brasses are the true sermons for the times. Happily they have survived in large numbers.'

'I am sorry to say, sir,' I replied, 'that I do not know.'

'Then let me advise you by all means to induce all your friends in the country to assist in the movement. A collection of good rubbings should be exhibited in every country town. I assure you, Winston,' he continued, 'that the movement is growing in the most satisfactory manner. I was never more pleased than I was the other day, when I went to take duty in a terribly Evangelical neighbourhood, and happening to go into a very neglected little church, there I saw two young ladies and their brother—all upon their knees in the chancel—making a rubbing of one of the finest fifteenth century brasses I ever saw. It was a most Catholic sight. Their hands were all black with the cobbler's wax, and their dresses tumbled and dirty, and I was glad to see so much self-denial in the good cause.'

'I confess that I scarcely like this passion for brasses,' observed Winston; 'one cannot but fear that it leads to a good deal of irreverent conversation in sacred places.'

'I trust not,' Yorke answered. 'Young people cannot fail to be seriously impressed by the features of the venerable bishops and pious laymen which they are transferring to paper; and much Catholic doctrine must be insinuated by the deciphering of the legends which surround them.'

'Let us hope that it is so,' said Winston doubtingly.

'Then they must certainly be struck with the contrast between these enduring brasses of mediæval times and the miserable shams of modern Protestantism. Only conceive what must be the faith of an age which uses plaster as the material for church-building, and paints iron to imitate stone. The hyprocrisy is perfectly disgusting.'

'Yet I am told that the use of artificial flowers is quite general in the Romish churches abroad,' remarked Winston.

'A most lamentable practice, it must be confessed,' replied Yorke, 'and a proof of the fatal influences of Puritanism, even in Roman quarters. I look upon artificial flowers as the result of a reaction against puritanical barbarism.'

'I don't quite see your reasoning,' said Winston; 'I

rather think they show how universal is the defection from primitive truth and severity.'

'Don't by any means suppose that I am defending Roman corruptions,' rejoined Yorke. 'Our line ought to be something quite distinct. It is for us as Anglo-Catholics to labour for the revival of the Anglo-Catholic system of the Middle Ages, as embodied in the glorious works of our English forefathers. I understand that there is a movement in the same direction among English Romanists themselves.'

'I confess I do not busy myself with their affairs,' replied Winston; 'I should be more disposed to unite with them in a national humiliation for the sins of which we all are guilty.'

'At any rate, it is a cheering sign,' persisted Yorke; 'and it is accompanied with another remarkable movement—a revival of the love for the ancient Gregorian music of the Church. At present the music in the Romanist chapels is truly lamentable.'

'I think we ought not to enter their chapels at all, if you will give me leave to say so,' said Winston. 'The Church of England is our sole mother, the Church of our baptism; and all other communions are in this country more or less guilty of schism.'

'But one may go as a looker on,' said Yorke apologetically. 'It was in this spirit that I went the

other day to that fashionable Romanist chapel, which they call the shilling opera.'

'What?' exclaimed Winston with a look of horror.

'Did you never hear of the shilling opera?' inquired Yorke. 'It's a most instructive place, I assure you, and very popular with Protestants, even with good Anglo-Catholics. They have the best Italian singers there at High Mass; and one can hear them for a shilling, instead of paying half a guinea or a guinea at the opera in the Haymarket.'

'A most fearful thought!' ejaculated Winston, manifestly very seriously distressed.

'But the new Gregorian movement will upset all that,' continued Yorke; 'especially as they have a surplice movement among the Romanists just as among ourselves. This is unquestionably a proof of the real vital unity of the two branches of the Church, though unhappily kings and popes have united to separate them, as far as visible union is concerned.'

'To me,' said Winston, 'it appears a most shocking thing that such persons as we know that the Italian actors and actresses are should be employed in assisting at the celebration of so awful a thing as the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as we must admit the Romanist mass to be, even with all the declensions of Rome.'

'Now, there, I think, you are rather hard upon actors

and actresses,' rejoined Yorke. 'Why should they not be employed as well as our own choristers in cathedrals? To my mind, it is a sign of life in the Romanist Church that it has an attraction for actors, and artists, and singers, such as our Anglican Church has not.'

'You amaze me, Yorke,' rejoined Winston. 'Are you not aware that in France no actor is allowed by the Roman Church to have Christian burial? I look upon this refusal as one of the last surviving remains of the wholesome discipline of a purer age.'

'I believe you're quite wrong in thinking so,' said Yorke. 'This bigoted hatred of the stage in the French priests is nothing better than a relic of Jansenist rigorism. The Jansenists, you know, were the puritans of Roman Catholicism.'

'I grieve,' rejoined Winston, 'to hear you speak so of a body of faithful men who stand almost alone in the Roman Church, in their efforts to restore the purity of the ancient faith.'

'Well,' said Yorke, 'however that may be, it cannot be right to brand a whole profession as un-Christian because of the misconduct of a few who belong to it. And certainly it is a merit in the Romanists that they seem to be able to get hold of singers, and dancers, and painters, far more than we do. In fact, I don't think I ever heard of a ballet-girl coming to church.'

'Are you serious in what you are saying?' asked Winston, evidently pained and puzzled.

'Never more in my life,' said Yorke. 'There must be something wrong about us, when we have nothing to offer as a counter-attraction to the fascination of theatrical worldliness. And really, when one comes to think of it, one can hardly wonder at our services, conducted as they are, being disliked by the theatrical profession. The stage presents a sort of ideal of splendour and beauty; and then imagine the contrast of our unmusical prayers, spouted out by a pompous rector in an auctioneer's desk, with surroundings enough to make a mediæval Catholic shiver.'

'I have yet to learn that the power of pleasing a ballet-girl is one of the notes of the Church,' replied Winston with marked severity of manner.

'However, as I was saying,' Yorke went on, 'this surplice movement among the Romanists is a satisfactory sign of life with them, as with ourselves.'

'I was not aware that they had ever adopted the black Genevan gown for preaching in,' observed Winston.'

'Far from it,' said Yorke, 'they preach in all sorts of ways, and appear to be less rigid and formal than ourselves. It 's the cut of the surplice which is creating so healthy an excitement among them.'

'I am quite in the dark about it,' said Winston.

'Oh!' exclaimed Yorke, 'the movement is quite identical with our own, at least in some respects. They are reviving the form of the true Middle Age surplice, which has been carefully preserved with us, but has been supplanted by the debased Roman Form, which is positively hideous, and only not so bad as the French form. It is a most encouraging sign of identity between the Anglo-Roman and the Anglo-Catholic branches. The same reformation is going on in the make of the Eucharistic vestments; and I understand the opposition to the reform is most violent.'

'You astonish me,' said Winston; 'I thought that Romanist uniformity prevailed in all things.'

'That's quite a mistake,' said Yorke. 'I am told that there is likely to be a singular break up on the question of the vestments, and that the priests of the old school positively refuse to celebrate mass in a mediæval chasuble.'

'It strikes me rather as a sign of the prevalence of the same follies with them,' said Winston, 'which are prevailing with us. And I cannot but fear that we are going rather too fast ourselves in our love for externals. It is said of St Bernard, the last, and one of the greatest of the Fathers, that he prayed for many years in a certain

chapel without ever noticing its special style of architecture.'

'What an extraordinary saint!' ejaculated Yorke. Just at this moment his servant came into the room, bringing him a card and a message. And breakfast being now over, he hastily took his leave, and left me alone with Winston.

'Don't go, Mr Seymour,' said Winston kindly, as I prepared to follow Yorke's example; 'that is, unless you are obliged.'

I answered that I had no lecture until eleven that morning, and sat down again, half pleased, but half reluctant.

During the whole of the conversation I had felt myself in a condition which may be described as a compound of excitement and collapse. On the whole I was utterly bewildered. I was being introduced into a new world of thought, where ideas which I had never even heard of were taken for granted as indisputably true; and all the habits of mind to which I had been accustomed were rudely set aside as below serious consideration. Then here was that great object of my hereditary terror, the Church of Rome, made a topic of familiar criticism, and discussed, and praised, and blamed, with a knowledge of its inner life as startling to my inexperience as would have been the sudden representation of a scene in the

Arabian Nights. As one topic succeeded another from Yorke's voluble tongue, I almost lost my breath, and wondered what could possibly come next. What with brasses, and symbolisms, and excommunicated ballet-girls, and St Augustine and St Bernard, and my father's little font within the altar rails, and a Romanist surplice agitation, and the non-poetic character of our Church services, and all the rest, my brain seemed turning round and round; and I could scarcely believe that I was the same Edward Seymour who had come up to St Bede's less than a year ago, totally innocent of all the notions which now seemed to be the very life and soul of the community into which I was thus suddenly thrown. However, I had no time for arranging my thoughts at the moment, and I could only wonder what Winston would say, now that we were alone. He did not long leave me in doubt.

'I think you seemed a little troubled, Mr Seymour,' began Winston, 'when Mr Yorke was speaking just now of the impropriety of placing the font within the altar rails.'

'Well, sir,' I replied, 'as you ask me, I don't mind telling you that I was a little disgusted. It so happens that in my own father's church that is just where the font stands, and always has stood since I was a child.'

'You must overlook the accidental illustration if you

please, Mr Seymour,' said Winston; 'for Mr Yorke is the last man in the world to wish to wound any person's feelings, and certainly not those of your excellent father, who is known as a good Churchman. But you are not, perhaps, aware of the importance that ought to be attached to all the externals of religion, in connection with an orthodox symbolism, which itself is a deduction from that mystical teaching which the Fathers observed in Holy Scripture itself.'

If by mysticism is meant mystification, I thought to myself, this is only getting worse and worse; but I only replied, that if by symbolism was meant something to do with the Sacraments, I did not see why the font itself was not the symbol of baptism, just as the altar was the symbol of the Lord's Supper.

'That is rather a new view,' said Winston; 'and I doubt your having any authority for it. The Church has fixed the entrance of the sacred building as the proper place for the font, thus instructing her children that it is by the regeneration of baptism that our souls are admitted into the spiritual temple.'

'But, sir,' I ventured to reply, 'is not that a rather shaky piece of symbolism? Don't you think, if this is what is meant, that the baptism ought to be administered outside the church door?'

'Primitive custom is in favour of the other arrange-

ment,' he replied, as if the question was thus absolutely settled.

'I don't think our people would stand it, sir,' I said. 'The draughts inside the church are frightful, and the mothers and nurses would declare it would kill the babies to christen them near the church door.'

'Yes, Mr Seymour,' said Winston; 'it is one of the worst signs of the times that we have carried our love of luxury and personal ease into the house of God itself. Men go to church and expect to find all the warmth and comfort of a modern drawing-room. These high-backed square pews, lined and cushioned, in which people lounge at their ease, are the natural creation of a self-indulgent religion. I confess I almost shudder when I hear persons calling themselves religious, declaring that they cannot attend the daily prayers of the Church unless the air is warmed, and complaining of the cold and hardness of the stone floor. I am tempted to ask such effeminate Christians if they remember how our Divine Master prayed all night in the cold mountain air; and whether they think the early Christians set up pews in their churches, and had soft cushions to kneel on.'

'Surely, sir,' I answered, 'it is not wrong to like to be comfortable in church.'

'I grieve to hear you say so,' Winston rejoined, looking quite shocked. 'When men come to humble

themselves for their sins, and to seek pardon, if possibly it may be granted them, comfort is surely the last thing that they should desire.'

'Well, sir,' I said, 'I don't know how that may be. Besides, suppose one knows that one's sins *are* forgiven, I don't see why we should make ourselves miserable, just because we happen to be saying our prayers.'

'No person can possibly know for certain that his sins are forgiven,' Winston answered. 'Holy Scripture and antiquity unite in teaching us that there is but one perfect forgiveness, the forgiveness which is granted in baptism. The sacrament cannot be renewed, and therefore there remains only a trembling hope for those who relapse, especially when the ancient penitential discipline is unhappily fallen into abeyance.'

'You must forgive me, sir,' I could not help replying, 'if I say that this seems a most horrible doctrine, and dead against all the religion I have been brought up to believe.'

'You have at least been brought up to believe your catechism,' he replied, 'and you are familiar with the office for the administration of holy baptism.'

'Undoubtedly,' I said.

'You also, in the words of the Creed,' he continued, 'acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.'

As he said this in his grave and measured tones, it

seemed as if a strange gleam of lurid light shot across my mind, and lighted up for a moment some possible depths of mystery, gloom, and sadness, and I saw at once the deduction he was about to draw from the words he had repeated. All I said, however, was that of course I knew that people were only baptised once.

'If then,' he continued, 'baptism is the sacrament appointed by our Lord for the forgiveness of sins, and there is no possible repetition of baptism, what must be the awful condition of those who fall into grievous sin after they are baptised?'

'I always thought that we are forgiven through repentance and faith,' I said.

'The promise is given in connection with holy baptism,' said Winston. 'Apart from baptism, faith and repentance do not so certainly avail.'

'Why so, sir?' I asked.

'Do you not see the force of the reasoning?' he went on. 'Repentance and faith do not avail, at the first, without baptism; for are we not buried with Christ in baptism? Are we not taught that as many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ? We cannot be baptised into Christ a second time when we have thrown off Christ by our grievous sin.'

I was utterly confounded, but I was also utterly unconvinced.

'Then,' I said, after a short pause, 'what is the use of faith and repentance?'

'For those who thus sin,' he replied, 'repentance is like a plank after shipwreck. This is the constant teaching of the Fathers before the Apostolical traditions were obscured by the corruptions of Romanists and Protestants alike. Let me read to you what St Clement of Rome says.' He took up a book from his table and read as follows: '"If such men as Noah, Daniel, and Job cannot by their righteousness save their children, with what confidence shall we approach to the palace of God, if we keep not baptism pure and undefiled? He who dealeth corrûptly in the fight of incorruption, what shall be done to him? For of such as have not kept the seal, He saith, 'Their worm dieth not.' Let us, then, while we are on earth, repent." And this is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers.'

'But,' I rejoined, 'suppose a man does repent, is he not then forgiven?'

'There, Mr Seymour,' said Winston, 'is the awful question. Supposing he does repent; how can we know that we do adequately repent? We know that when we were baptised in our infancy, we received the Divine gift in its fulness, and were clothed in the robe of spotless innocence, and sealed to God. But now, unhappily, all that we do really know is that we have

sinned. Can we be as certain that our subsequent repentance is as real as our sins have been?'

He was looking at me as he said this, with those grave, sad, penetrating eyes of his, and I felt that every word that he uttered came from the depths of his own convictions. In a moment I found myself comparing my own heedless, easy way of judging myself and my daily life with that intense, heart-searching vigour with which I was convinced that Winston must habitually judge himself; and I remained for a brief space unable to make any reply. At length I asked him whether we might not trust that our repentance was sincere.

'Possibly so,' he answered; 'but, as sinners, can we be at peace unless we know that it is so? The Church in her happiest days taught a doctrine concerning repentance which is unknown in these self-deceiving days. Let me read to you what another Father, Theodoret, says.'

And he opened a large volume and read, '"The wounds received after baptism are curable; but not as before, in that their remission is given through faith alone, but now through many tears, and mournings, and weepings, and fastings, and prayer, and toil proportioned to the greatness of the sin committed." And St Chrysostom says the same.' And he turned to another volume, and read a passage where it is taught that post-baptismal

guilt is only forgiven through "condemnation of sin, confession, deep and abiding and abased humility, intense prayer, many tears night and day, much alms-giving, abandonment of all anger, universal forgiveness, and bearing all things meekly." 'Compare, then, these views of the Fathers with those of our modern religious world, and think how grievous is the contrast.'

'But, sir,' I asked, after reflecting a little, 'is all this in the Bible? It seems to me quite different from anything I could ever see there. Of course I know I may be wrong; but if this is true, why do not all good people find these views in Scripture for themselves?'

'For the plain reason that they do trust to themselves to find them,' said Winston. 'This is the sad character of our modern religion, that it pretends to honour Holy Scripture, and yet dishonours it by neglecting its plainest teaching.'

Surprised at this fresh charge against modern religion, I could only remark that I had always thought that a belief in the whole Bible, and in its sufficiency, was the great mark which distinguished Protestants from Catholics. I still used the old-fashioned names which I had been brought up to use, and spoke of all who believed in the Pope as Catholics, and all who did not believe in him as Protestants. Winston at once took me up,

informing me that the English Church was not Protestant, but Anglo-Catholic.

'However, Mr Seymour,' he proceeded, 'that is not what we are now discussing. It is only too true that in our English branch of the Church Catholic, we have practically adopted that method of interpreting Holy Scripture which Scripture itself condemns.'

'Indeed!' I exclaimed, wondering what was to come next.

'Surely,' he replied, 'you have not forgotten how St Paul tells the Thessalonians that they are to hold the tradition that they have been taught, whether by word or by his Epistles. And the same reference to the unwritten tradition occurs again and again in the Apostolic writings.'

'Of course,' I said, 'that seems natural enough; because everybody knows that Christ and the Apostles taught their disciples by word of mouth before the New Testament was written. But I thought that now we have got the whole Bible all the rest was needless.'

'Then,' said he, 'what do you make of the various texts in which the believers are referred to those unwritten traditions as to the Apostles' teachings? What right have we to neglect them if the Apostles thought them so important?'

'Well, sir,' I replied, 'I can't say. But I always understood that the Bible was sufficient.'

'We will let that question stand over for the present,' said Winston. 'I want you to realise this undoubted fact, that the existence of this body of Apostolic doctrine is recognised in the Bible itself, and that when you come to the writings of the early Fathers, the continued existence of this same body of doctrine is still recognised; and that according to this patristic tradition, the condition of those baptised persons who lapse into grievous sin is regarded as most lamentable. If the Fathers, who were in possession of the unbroken Apostolic teaching, were right, we in England to-day are fearfully in the wrong. This fashionable religion, with its lazy self-satisfaction, is a delusion of Satan. Where, let me ask you, are our tears? where are our fastings? where are our mortifications? where are our intense prayers? where are our abounding almsgivings? Is it not the fact that our religion is not that of the martyrs, and confessors, and saints, and bishops, who suffered and toiled and died for Christ in those early ages?'

As he spoke he waxed more and more eager and eloquent; his pale cheeks reddened, and his eyes seemed to glow with new brightness. I was enthralled by his passionate earnestness, though my judgment was quite uninfluenced by his reasoning.

'Mr Seymour,' he resumed after a pause, 'believe me, when I tell you that I tremble when I look at all you young men, in the thoughtless enjoyment of the pleasures of your youth, and when I remember what you—nearly all of you, at least—really are. What are you all doing in order to repair the loss of your baptismal innocence? God forbid that I should set up myself as an example to any human being, but I would gladly, indeed, lend a hand to anyone here in Oxford who needed a word of help.'

Again he was silent, and as I did not by any means like the tone which the conversation was assuming, I returned to the more purely argumentative question, and asked him whether it was the case that these views about baptism were really held by all the Fathers of the Church.

'Your question is perfectly natural and justifiable,' he replied. 'And here it is that we see the value of the great principle which is explained in the little book I gave you the other day.'

Now, I thought, I shall have to confess that I have not devoted all my leisure to the study of this *commonitorium.* Hoping to effect a diversion in my favour, I recurred to what he had said about Catholic corruptions.

'I think, sir,' I said, 'that you spoke of the Catholics here having departed from the teaching of the Fathers.'

'You mean the Roman Catholics, no doubt,' he observed. 'Yes, so it is unhappily all through the universal Church. Protestants have erred by the invention of their doctrine about the sufficiency of faith to procure the pardon of all sin, and have profanely disparaged the Sacraments as means of grace. Romanists have erred in the opposite direction. They have added to the number of the Sacraments, and converted the ordinance of penance and absolution into a second baptism. I understand that, under the guidance of their priesthood, the people are as fully satisfied about their spiritual state as are the lowest of our own Ultra-Protestant schools.'

'Then, sir,' I rejoined, 'who is right after all?'

'We alone are right,' he said, 'who continue the unbroken traditions of the early Fathers, as they have always been maintained by the orthodox Anglo-Catholic body in our branch of the Catholic Church. Our test, as I have said, is that infallible test which St Vincent of Lerins has taught us. There is one only, and one certain guide to the true Apostolic teaching. All things are to be maintained which have been taught always, everywhere, and by all. Everything else is to be rejected as a novelty, and as forming no part of the deposit of Apostolic doctrine committed to the keeping of the Church in all ages'

'Well, sir,' I said, 'I confess this seems rather a difficult way of getting over the difficulty. Why can't we be satisfied with the Bible only?'

'The results of that principle are only too clear. It has been the source of all the soul-destroying errors which have ever devastated the Church.'

As he spoke, he accidentally caught sight of a clock standing upon his chimney-piece, exclaimed with surprise at the lateness of the hour, and with a word or two of earnest recommendation that I should study Vincentius with care and reverence, dismissed me, adding a friendly expression of his hope to see me again.

Looking back, after so many subsequent years, upon this conversation and upon other similar occasions, when I heard the same views urged upon me, I find it difficult to determine how far my own ultimate conduct was influenced by them. On the whole, I think, the impression they made upon me was one of increased interest in the position which baptism, as a sacrament, held in the Christian scheme as taught in the New Testament. The peculiar views on post-baptismal sin advocated by Winston and by others of the same school, never seemed to me to be true, and never even had any attraction for me. What I had said to Winston under the impulse of the moment appeared to me to be correct the whole time that I was advancing towards the Roman solution

of the general Church question. Notwithstanding everything that was taught by the Fathers, I was satisfied that the entire tone of the New Testament teaching was clearly in favour of the doctrine that faith and repentance were just as sure a condition for obtaining the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism as they were a sure condition in connection with baptism for obtaining pardon for all previous guilt. The arguments on the other side were, I was confident, of the nature of verbal quibbles, for there was something monstrous in the supposition that God could refuse forgiveness to those who really believed in Him, repented of their sins, and loved Him.

As to that supposed difficulty of attaining to a sufficiently deep penitence after baptism, which, I was assured, was an accepted belief of the early Church, I could see nothing in the Bible which sanctioned the theory. I disbelieved in it, as a matter of fact, when tested by the actual experience of Christians themselves.

And the prominence which it assumed in certain of the patristic writings tended rather to satisfy me that patristic authority was worth but little in settling matters of doctrine, than to convince me that this particular doctrine was true. Moreover, tried by this famous test of Vincent of Lerins, the argument in its favour clearly broke down, for there was no proof whatever that

the dogma had really been held always, everywhere, and by all.

And when, long afterwards, I embraced the Roman doctrine concerning the Church Catholic, it of course involved an acceptance of the ordinance of penance as a sacrament, which I received, like every other doctrine of Rome, on the authority of that Church. I could see no more difficulty in supposing that God should make the absolution pronounced by a priest a condition of the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin, than that he should make the application of water, in connection with the use of certain words, the condition of the forgiveness of the sins of the unbaptised. At the same time, as I have said, the earnestness with which Winston and other speakers and writers expressed their own feelings as to the fearful nature of the guilt of baptised Christians who sinned grievously, certainly tended to give the entire sacramental aspect of Christianity a prominence in my eyes which it had never before assumed.

The application of the famous Vincentian maxim in like manner seemed to me entirely unreal and visionary. It was long before I cared to put my objections to the theory into any definite argumentative shape. But I never could persuade myself that the test of the *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus* was anything better than an ingeni-

ous form of self-deception. The New Testament, I saw, is a definite collection of actual writings. They may be clear, or they may be obscure, but there they are. The moment, on the other hand, that we come to apply the text of Vincentius, we seem to be begging the whole question, and to be losing ourselves in the pursuit of a shadow. All through my undergraduate days I remained an unbeliever in this famous formula.

One effect at the same time was produced upon me by its repeated repetition. It impressed my imagination with the idea of some unbroken chain of unwritten tradition, and of an organised body of men whose function it was to preserve and interpret this tradition. It was my imagination only that was thus affected; but it is through the action of the imagination that the mind is naturally first prepared for the ultimate argumentative reception of new religious opinions. And so it was with me.

CHAPTER V.

I DID not see very much of Winston for some time after I had breakfasted with him. Fortunately I had nothing to do with him in his proctorial capacity, and personally he was one of a class of minds which I never found attractive. I could honour and be practically influenced by the intense earnestness of such men, but I never could believe in them, and only to a certain extent could I ever like them. I think it is La Bruyère who has said that gravity has always something in it of the nature of imposture. Broadly stated, the idea is untrue; but that gravity is often a sign of intellectual narrowness, and of that moral infirmity which goes by the name of bigotry, is undeniable.

And in the old days of which I am writing, gravity, especially on all ecclesiastical subjects, was cultivated by many adherents of the new theology as a Christian virtue. They were, for the most part, like Winston, men who could never see the possibly ludicrous aspect of any important question. They were perpetually being shocked, as they called it, and thinking free speech irreverent. To laugh at a bishop was profane; and

generally they considered that it was right to be so habitually conscious of one's own unworthiness and of the lamentable wickedness of the times as to be unequal to any light or frivolous occupation. Wholly unconsciously, they exhibited in themselves a realisation of old Froissart's imputation against the English of his day, that they took even their pleasures sadly.

A most striking contrast to the tone of the more austere members of the party was exhibited by Arlington, whom North had mentioned to me as their *enfant terrible.* Having taken his degree, and possessing a small income of his own, he continued to live in Oxford, and took the keenest interest in the theological and political movements of the hour. Arlington, in fact, was a person whom nobody could quite make out. Everybody believed him to be on the whole sincere, but whether he really meant one half of the paradoxical sayings with which he loved to startle undergraduates, bachelors, and dons alike, it was impossible to tell.

One fine afternoon I had been strolling with North in St John's gardens, and we were just passing through the College gate, when Arlington, striding up vigorously, after his usual fashion, took possession of us as his companions for a walk into the country. For months past I had not been troubling myself much about theological questions, and was following the ordinary

course of Oxford reading and Oxford pleasures, not at all immoderately, but without the smallest serious thought of enrolling myself among the disciples of the Tracts school. With Arlington, however, it was out of the question to expect no reference to theological controversy, if we were to spend half an hour in his company. He began at once. We were close to the new 'Martyrs' Memorial,' which had not long before been built in honour of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, by the irritated and exuberant Protestantism of the hour.

'There!' cried Arlington, pointing to it with his stout walking stick; 'do you know that this precious exhibition of English folly is exactly the height of Haman's gallows?'

We confessed our ignorance of this important piece of architectural information.

'Yes,' he replied, 'so it is; and a very natural and appropriate coincidence besides. The only difference is that Haman was hanged, and Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley were burnt.'

'Come, Arlington,' North rejoined, 'this is slightly too much, even for you. You can hardly compare three men who died for their convictions to a cowardly scoundrel like Haman.'

'If you speak of cowardly scoundrels, my dear fellow,' said Arlington, 'pray tell me what that wretched Cranmer

was. The very mention of religious convictions in connection with that miserable turncoat takes one's breath away.'

'Well,' said North, 'I give up Cranmer, if you please; but at any rate the other two were genuine martyrs.'

'Nobody is a martyr who dies in a bad cause,' replied Arlington.

'But you don't mean to say that Ridley and Latimer died in a bad cause?'

'I do, indeed,' rejoined Arlington, to my utter amazement. 'They were rebels, and deserved to die.'

'Rebels!' echoed North, 'against whom, may I ask?'

'Why, against the Pope,' said Arlington, as coolly as if he was announcing the most obvious of undeniable truths.

'Of course you're joking,' I ventured to say.

'Not a bit of it,' replied Arlington; 'I never was more serious in my life.'

'Are you ever serious?' North interposed.

'Always,' retorted Arlington; 'and never more so than when I seem to be the reverse.'

'Thank you for the hint as to the right way of judging you,' North observed.

'What I say is this,' Arlington went on, 'the Pope was the lawful head of the Church, and Ridley and Latimer

were guilty of treason against him, and they deserved what they got in return.'

'Then, may I ask,' said North, 'what you think of your own conduct, in now living in flat disobedience to the Pope to-day?'

'Ah! that's my misfortune, not my fault,' replied Arlington. 'But I will say this, that we shall never have any peace in the Church till we've got the Pope back again.'

At this sally North laughed outright, and I walked on in silence, wondering what was to come next. For a few minutes no one spoke, when suddenly Arlington turned sharply round to me, and exclaimed—

'By the way, Seymour, what's your view of the Church of England?'

'The Church of England!' I repeated, bewildered by the question. 'Well,' I continued, gathering my thoughts together, 'I suppose it's the established religion of England, founded by king, lords, and commons; and with the consent of the bishops, of course.'

'My dear Seymour,' replied Arlington, 'begging your pardon for using strong language, which is a thing I detest, that is the vilest Erastianism. My view of the Church is that it is a mistake.'

'What can you possibly mean?' asked North. 'I consider that it's one of the greatest blessings of the

country that religion is part and parcel of the law of the land; and how any good man can be a dissenter is more than I can comprehend.'

'Ah!' rejoined Arlington, 'that's all your traditional Toryism.'

'But you call yourself a Tory,' said North.

'Of course I am,' replied Arlington; 'but not one of your miserable Conservatives of to-day. My Toryism is of the good old school of Laud and Strafford. Laud was the only decent prelate the English Church has ever produced.'

'Why I heard you attacking his master, Charles the First, not ten days ago,' North said.

'Perhaps I was,' said Arlington, 'and he behaved infamously to Laud.'

I suggested that some historians considered that the charge of duplicity against Charles could never be disproved?

'What do you mean by duplicity?' asked Arlington in his sharpest manner.

'Everybody knows what duplicity is,' I rejoined a little nettled. 'I consider it much the same as what is called, in plain English, lying.'

'There you're wrong, my dear fellow,' retorted Arlington. 'I don't defend lying, except in certain cases;

but duplicity is often a virtue, and is, in fact, the highest form of truth.'

North and I here shouted with laughter, while Arlington gravely continued—

'Your laughing shows that you are no casuists. Society would not get on without deception. Life would be simply intolerable if everybody always told the truth.'

'On the contrary,' said North, 'I hold that truth is the foundation of all society. And this reminds me of a notion that I hear you people of the Tracts have got hold of about some patristic theory of deception, as you call it. If this is the case, it gives me more distaste than ever for the Fathers whom you worship.'

Here was another startling theological novelty, which seemed suddenly to awaken my dormant interest in those incomprehensible patristic times.

'You mean the Economy, of course,' replied Arlington.

'Economy,' I echoed; 'what a strange meaning to give to the word!'

'Not at all,' said Arlington; 'in our modern use of the word we simply mean good management, a judicious arrangement of all things that are committed to us, and a wise employment of means to good ends. This is just the patristic idea of the Economy. The Fathers thought

it right so to manage the truths handed down to them as to make them most acceptable to the Pagan world, and not to allow the most sacred things to be mocked at by the multitude.'

'I don't like the notion at all,' exclaimed North; 'it's not open or straightforward, and what's more, it's un-English; it's Jesuitical.'

'Then what do you say to the Scriptural injunction about not casting your pearls before swine?' asked Arlington triumphantly.

North was silenced, and looked displeased, but unconvinced. As for myself, I could not deny the force of the Scriptural command, and I saw nothing unreasonable in the system of action itself expressed in this singular word. Only I felt afresh the difficulties and obscurities of the whole subject of doctrinal explanation. Vague suspicions crossed my thoughts as to the truth of the belief in which I had been educated, that the Bible contained the whole substance of the teaching of Christ and the Apostles; but it was a mere vague suspicion, and I imagined for a time that it was as transitory as it was vague. Nevertheless I am satisfied that the germ of a new idea was now slowly taking root in my mind. I was beginning to familiarise myself with the conception of the foundation of Christianity and the Christian Church as a historical reality, apart from the New Testament

writings. These writings by degrees presented themselves to my thoughts as a collection of incidental documents, called into existence through the changing circumstances of the Christians of the day. I began to consider that it was an anachronism to look at the New Testament as the foundation of our belief in Christ, and to suspect that it was mere narrowness and ignorance which led people to reject all non-Scriptural sources of information concerning the original facts of Christianity.

It was long, indeed, before I consciously and formally adopted such views. Years passed after I left Oxford before they assumed their final shape in my convictions. But it was through the effect of many talks, and sermons that I heard, and books that I read, that the old-fashioned Church of England beliefs to which I clung were first quietly undermined, and the elements of new modes of thought introduced in their place. The moment I had begun to realise the undoubted truth that Christianity, as a religion, is a fact and has a history, and is not a mere collection of written dogmas, the beginnings of the ultimate change were fairly accomplished within me. And I think it was during this very walk that the new conception first presented itself to my imagination as a thing that might possibly be true.

Though the subject of the Economy was dropped,

Arlington proceeded to take North to task for his use of the term un-English.

'What do you mean by un-English, North?' he began. 'Surely you don't adopt the vulgar brag of Englishmen, about our being the model nation of the whole world.'

'I do consider,' North answered, 'that in our constitution and in our established religion, we really are the happiest nation in the world.'

'There you go on again,' said Arlington, 'with your established religion. I 'm sick of all this prate about establishments.'

'Do you mean to say,' asked North, 'that you don't think it a good thing for the country that Christianity should be part and parcel of the law of the land? I don't set myself up as a pattern of religiousness; God forbid! But I value religion, and I respect it, and I hope some day I shall be a more religious fellow than I am now. And I have no patience with men like you, who ought to know better, and who run down the laws of your country, and the institutions of people who were a thousand times better and wiser than we are.'

'Bravo!' cried Arlington; 'sentiments worthy to be uttered at the annual dinner of your county Constitutional Association. Christianity is part and parcel of the laws of the land! Yes, that is precisely the correct expression; I've heard it a hundred times before. And how com-

plimentary it is to Christianity itself. Christianity is thus duly sanctioned and recommended to the attention of that masterpiece of humanity, the modern Englishman. It becomes a sacred thing, like the judges' wigs, or trial by jury, or the Lord Mayor's coach. Under such patronage, who can fail to discern its transcendent merits?'

I could not help laughing, but North took all this rhapsody more seriously.

'You may jest as you please, Arlington,' he rejoined, 'but I am convinced that it is through this very Established Church that the principles of civil and religious liberty have been preserved, and are held up for adoption by other countries too.'

'Civil and religious liberty!' Arlington repeated. 'That's another of the cant phrases we have invented for our own glorification. What a farce it is to pretend that people ought to be at liberty to adopt all the modern falsehoods that palm themselves off as true Scriptural Christianity. You might as well pretend that every lovesick housemaid has a right to drown herself in the river, because the baker's man has jilted her.'

'That is a totally different thing,' said North.

'Is it?' asked Arlington. 'Perhaps you will next maintain that among the bulwarks of Christianity is to be reckoned that favourite toast of "Church and King,"

that seems to be now going out of fashion at last. What a glorious thing must be the Christianity of England, when it is upheld by a hundred squires, and lords, and rectors, standing up, glass in hand, and shouting, "Church and King!" with three times three, and one cheer more, till their red faces are twice as red as before. Only fancy St Paul assisting at such a new development of the missoinary work, and drinking confusion to all heretics in old crusted port.'

'These are mere abuses,' rejoined North; 'and by your own showing they are going out. It is most unfair to take them as arguments against the Church.'

'If they are abuses,' Arlington answered, 'they are the natural growths of a Church which was founded by him of the glorious, pious, and immortal memory—no that's a mistake—the glorious, pious, and immortal memory toast belongs to Dutch William, that last of our great Anglican saints and deliverers. I don't know what is the correct way of speaking of that eminent saint and reformer, Henry the Eighth, to whom we owe our ecclesiastical existence.'

A short pause ensued, and I then suggested that I had always understood that our Church was not founded by Henry, but that under him she threw off the corruption of Rome.

'Just so,' said Arlington; 'she rejected the errors of Rome, and adopted a special set of errors of her own.

But practically she owes her existence to bluff Harry and his love for Anne Boleyn. Harry had no more conscience than the sole of my shoe. Do you mean to tell me that the Pope had no right to sanction his marriage with his brother's widow?'

I replied that I thought it a difficult question.

'Not a bit of it,' said Arlington. 'We are a king-made Church; and we are the most king-worshipping Church in all Christendom; worse than even the Czar-worshipping Russians.'

'How do you make that out?' asked North.

'Why, do you suppose,' said Arlington, 'that in the services of the Greek Church they have anything so despicable as we have, praying actually five times for our most religious and gracious king in the morning prayers. Don't you know how that model of sanctity, Queen Elizabeth—gentle Betsey, as Cobbett calls her—told one of her disobedient bishops, that as she had made him, so she would unfrock him, with one of those oaths that came so naturally out of her royal lips?'

'What does all that prove?' said North.

'Everything,' rejoined Arlington; 'our people drink "Church and King" at these dinners, because we are a king-made institution. Just look at our churches. We've abolished images, most absurdly, and paint up the second commandment over our altars; and then we

put up our own special image, as the expression of our faith and worship. Our sacred image is the royal arms, brilliantly painted and gilded, with the lion and unicorn in appropriate postures, protecting the pious emblems with their uplifted legs. It really is too ludicrous. There was the old Jewish tabernacle and temple, in which one exception was made in favour of images, and angels were set up over the mercy seat. Our exception is quite another thing. Instead of the cherubim we have the lion and the unicorn; and what they guard is not the gospel of Christ, but the king's arms! But I suppose this is one of the illustrations of your favourite civil and religious liberty all over the world.'

What more than this he would have said I cannot tell. North was plainly so much annoyed, that the talk might possibly have been brought to an unpleasant termination. Happily, another set of men, known to both Arlington and North, just then met us, and Arlington could no longer dilate on the enormities of the Church. And thus his violent tirade was brought to an end.

Nothing, of course, came of this walk and talk in the way of immediate influence upon my opinions. Yet, at the same time, I am sure that, little as it might be thought likely, North himself, quite as much as Arlington, was one of those among my contemporaries who materially predisposed me to sever my connection with the

Church of England. As has been already said, like many other religiously-disposed young men, I came up to Oxford with my mind filled with a vague but lofty ideal of the true character of the Christian Church, as I supposed it must necessarily be found existing, as a reality, by reason of its Divine origin. I had not absolutely identified that realised ideal with the Church Establishment, as an actual institution; but I imagined that within its borders, and in loyal obedience to its fundamental principles, there were to be found a numerous body of clergy and laity, animated by an enlightened piety, and cordially co-operating in all good works, who might fairly be taken to be the legitimate representatives of that perfect Christian community whose existence seemed to be perpetually taken for granted in the New Testament. I had no very definite views, it is true, as to the outward organisation which held all these excellent persons together. But I had, nevertheless, a profound belief in their real unity of feeling and purpose, and in the necessary tendency of their inner spiritual life to promote a uniformity of outward profession and practice.

That any equally perfect realisation of the high Scriptural standard could exist anywhere out of the English Church, I never seriously believed. The position of Protestant Dissenters was to me a rather unat-

tractive puzzle, and the Roman Church was simply a mystery. I cannot be said to have had any very strong feelings against its claims, for I had no defined opinions at all concerning them, except that many Catholic peculiarities were unscriptural and false. Into the common Protestant notion that Rome necessarily taught idolatry, I never could enter. At the same time, the Roman religious services, so far as I had heard of them —for I had never been inside a Catholic church or chapel—were not distasteful to me in the same degree that I disliked the services of such Dissenting communities and Scotch Presbyterians as I had seen.

When, then, I came across a man like North, whose devotion to the Establishment was based upon grounds so totally unlike my own, I felt chilled, rather than roused to any warmer loyalty and attachment to its system. Now, when the experience of many years has taught me to understand the infinite varieties and capacities of different minds, I can do justice to that large class of Englishmen of whom North was a type, whose temperaments are so unlike what mine was in those undergraduate days; and I can understand that, to men like him, the worship of an ideal such as I myself worshipped would have been impossible. It is as unfair to set such persons down as unspiritual and unenlightened, as it would be to impute religious or moral

defects to those who have no ear for music or no eye for pictures.

In England men of the same class as North abound to an extent unknown abroad. They are the creation, partly of the peculiar character of the Church of England, and partly of that distaste for abstract and logical speculation which is less common among the more cultivated of the continental nations than among ourselves. Wherever the Roman creed, with its scientific completeness, its special doctrine concerning 'Divine faith,' and its rigid discipline, is the dominant religion of a country, this non-dogmatic, unidealising, and yet hearty attachment to an established Church is almost impossible. It is only when an Establishment is as comprehensive as is the Anglican Church, and tolerates that freedom and critical spirit in its members which is denounced alike by Rome and by every Nonconformist body, that it can conciliate the affections of the large majority of an educated laity.

In those younger days, as I have said, this interpretation of minds like that of North never occurred to me. His attachment to the Establishment, based, as I thought, upon such low and unspiritual grounds, tended rather to make me a less fervent admirer of a Church which could attract and retain the affections of men who could love it for such false or undoctrinal reasons. It

helped to lessen my regard for the Church as an organised, united, and spiritual institution, and prepared me for making a choice at some future time between the extreme Protestant theory, which regards the Church of the New Testament as consisting of pious believers alone, and the Roman theory, which venerates the Church as the one divinely appointed channel of supernatural grace to the soul, and instinct with sacramental life in all that she does.

Arlington's reckless sarcasms, again, tended in precisely the same direction, because they accustomed me to detect the elements of the ridiculous in so many of the proceedings of the churchmen of the day. It mattered not whether his satires were true or false, or whether they were argumentatively worth much or worth nothing. Their actual effect was to habituate me to criticise the Church itself, with diminished sentiments of respect and tenderness. And with the young mind it is the same in regard to its feelings towards institutions that it is in regard to its feelings towards individual persons. The calm, well-balanced judgment of maturer years is out of the question. Youth is the season of violent partisanship. Young men and young women alike are unable to understand the complexities of human character and motive, and imagine that humanity is made up of a multitude of saints and villains. They hate and

they love with equal ardour and indiscriminateness. Their friends are faultless, and all others are either unworthy of being known or deserving of detestation.

And it is the carrying of these enthusiastic likings and dislikings into ecclesiastical matters which seduces many minds to desert the English Church. They cannot realise the possibility of a defective spiritual life which is not at the same time a token of corruptness and fundamental error. Anglicanism, they argue, has given birth to all sorts of absurdities, and exhibits few, if any, tokens of the presence of a Divine spirit within it. Therefore they argue that Rome, which appears to be safe from these absurdities, and whose theory is directly antagonistic to that of England, must surely be in the right. That every possible religious organisation should bear within itself the seeds of a perpetual tendency to decay, simply because its members are mortal and ignorant men, is a truth, which, however undeniable in the eyes of maturer years, is too painful to be tolerated by young enthusiasm.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONG other causes, again, which in those days contributed to prepare me, and many others, for seriously entertaining the question between England and Rome, must be reckoned that study of mediæval architecture which was becoming fashionable in Oxford, both among the dons and the undergraduates. Here, again, there was really nothing to be laid hold of in the way of direct theological argument. For myself, I never was for a moment affected by the extravagance of the ultra Gothic zealots, who could see in the forms of pointed architecture a proof that the men who invented them and developed their wonderful beauties must necessarily have been animated by an enlightened piety. In those days we were beginning to hear a good deal of what were called the 'ages of faith;' and the churches and cathedrals of the 13th, the 14th, and the 15th centuries were glorified as the peculiar creation of generations that loved God with a warmth and a self-sacrifice that have no parallel in these modern, calculating, Protestant times.

This ecclesiastical view of the question was, indeed,

in harmony with the changes that were taking place in all men's minds as to the real life of the Middle Ages. Writers and thinkers who had not the faintest sympathy with the new Oxford movement, were loud in proclaiming the untenableness of the prevailing Protestant ideas as to the 'Dark Ages.' They were only dark, it was said, because we ourselves had no light to throw upon them. The real dark ages which followed upon the annihilation of the Roman civilisation were in reality passing away before a blaze of enlightenment. The arts of the Middle Ages, their literature, their social life, their political struggles, were the result of new-born energies, which did in fact lay the real foundation of our modern society.

And it was through the gradual spread of these new notions as to the life of the Middle Ages, that the Oxford passion for the study of its architectural relics first had its birth. It is true that the revival of the old High Church doctrine in a new shape contributed to give a special ecclesiastical tone to the mere antiquarian researches of a previous generation. But in this, as in many other details, it would be a grave mistake to forget the essential connection between the Oxford life of five-and-thirty years, or forty years ago, and the general changes in the opinions of English society. Oxford masters, and bachelors, and undergraduates, might glory

in their narrow-minded contempt for the spirit of the age in which they lived, and imagine themselves to be the pioneers in awakening the country to a sense of the splendour of mediæval art. But in reality they were swayed by the movements of the great waves of secular thought, and were emphatically the children of that very generation whose critical utilitarian sentiments they professed to scorn and condemn.

And it was the natural effect of this newly awakened love for mediæval art that it should bring with it a new class of ideas as to the Roman Church of the present day, as well as to mediæval Catholicism. To those who are familiar only with the feelings towards Rome which are now common in English society, it is difficult to explain the true character of the ideas which prevailed when the old-fashioned Protestantism of our fathers was still dominant in the country. To the vast majority of even well-educated and travelled English people the Roman Church, as a living institution, was a totally unknown mystery.

Of course everybody knew that there were a certain number of Catholic priests in England; and here and there in some obscure street, in London or elsewhere, a shapeless brick building, exactly resembling the typical dissenting meeting-house, might be recognised as a Catholic chapel. There were also known to be a certain

number of old Catholic peers and baronets and squires, chiefly in the North, some of whom were to be met with in country and aristocratic society, and who were now admitted to the House of Lords. Ireland's Catholicism did not count for much in the practical speculations of Englishmen who were interested in religious questions. It was as natural to an Irishman, it was supposed, to believe in the Pope, as it is natural to a Turk to believe in Mahomet; and the Popery of Irishmen was a disagreeable disturbing element in English politics, but that was all. Now and then, a Catholic name appeared in the records of literary activity. Lingard was recognised as an historian surprisingly superior to the prejudices of his Church, and the fame of a rising controversialist, Dr Wiseman, fresh from Rome, was beginning to spread.

But all this time, Rome, as the legitimate spiritual descendant of the Rome of the English Middle Ages, was unknown. The possibility of her existing as a living, spiritual power at our very doors, hardly crossed people's minds. There was not even a suspicion abroad that she was to be recognised as a fair competitor for the allegiance of Christians, in the midst of the crowd of Protestant rival sects, and that she might really have something to say for herself. Ladies and gentlemen, clergymen as well as laymen, would no more have thought

of going about to listen to the preaching of Romish prelates, as they do now, as quite a proper thing on Sundays, than they would have gone to the theatre on Sundays in Paris. As for all those imitations of Roman customs, decorations, and dresses, with which we are now familiar, nobody out of a lunatic asylum would have dreamed of such an outrage on Protestant susceptibilities. No thought of establishing sisterhoods and convents ever entered the brain of the most zealous of philanthropists. The very priests of Rome themselves could not be known by their dress from ordinary Englishmen; while the first appearance of a Protestant nun in her Papistical dress in the streets of London would have been the signal of a riot to all the vagabonds in the neighbourhood.

The Roman Catholic religion, in a word, was looked upon as a thing of the past, so far as the religious life of Englishmen was concerned. It had gone by and had its day, being a combination of formalism, superstition, ceremonialism, and cruelty. The figures of old bishops, still remaining in painted windows, clad in brilliant vestments and wearing mitres on their heads, were the symbol of an extinct class of ideas, just as the Anglican bishop's wig was held to be the necessary complement to his lawn sleeves—the whole costume typifying the sound Protestant religion of Englishmen.

That this popular mode of regarding modern Roman Catholicism should be seriously modified by the revived love of Gothic art was plainly inevitable. In the writings of the older students of Gothic Architecture, its religious elements were contemplated solely from the artistic point of view. Beginning with that eminently non-ecclesiastical personage, Horace Walpole, and comprising such purely antiquarian critics as Carter, Britton, the elder Pugin, and Rickman, the list of the revivers of Gothic architecture is most suggestive, as showing the radically diverse tendencies of the period that preceded the Oxford movement of our own day.

In my own undergraduate days, on the contrary, all was already changed. A host of men, young and middle-aged, and most of them destitute of all feeling for art, as such, began to take a sudden interest in every detail of the ancient churches, purely ecclesiastical in its sentiment, and tending naturally to create a distinctly religious interest in the ages that gave birth to this specially Christian architecture, as they called it. Their heads came to be filled with notions about credence tables, piscinæ, corporals, tabernacles, albs, dalmatics, croziers, mitres, copes, sedilia, canopies, altar tombs, effigies, brasses, fonts and their covers, and all the innumerable varieties of useful and ornamental inventions of Roman devotion and discipline. And thus it became

impossible to go on regarding Rome herself as the centre of an unspiritual, or idolatrous, or practically extinct religious life. A fresh and less hostile curiosity as to the actual realities and worship of the system which had created all these interesting æsthetic marvels, grew up insensibly in their Anglican admirers. After all, it was supposed, there must have been something that was wonderfully powerful in the faith which thus gave birth to a complete, artistic, and beautiful world of its own, and that faith must have been essentially English and worthy of attention, although it was formally and of necessity Roman.

Again; the Romanising influence of the revived study of Gothic architecture was intensified by the fact, that for whatever reason, the popular English taste loves the Gothic forms of design, and is comparatively insensible to the attractiveness of Greek and Italian buildings. That national fondness for old cathedrals, old churches and abbeys, old castles and old palaces, which is as inherent in the English mind as is the attachment to old institutions and old customs, solely because they are old, has unquestionably predisposed many a cultivated mind towards the reception of the Roman theological creed. The assertion put forth by Roman controversialists, that theirs is 'the old faith,' has a direct influence on a people so little predisposed to believe in mere

novelty as a passport to its good will. And with the ordinary thinker and reader, it is only the mediæval art which is associated with the ideas of antiquity in religion, while mediæval religion was confessedly Roman. There is nothing that speaks to the English eye of any more primitive or patristic period. So far as the monuments of the past can speak to the Englishman, there is but one alternative for those who are dissatisfied with the existing Anglican Establishment. He must choose between the Anglicanism of modern days and the Romanism of antiquity.

The extent, indeed, to which this love of mediæval art has taken possession of the English mind is proved by the almost universal adoption of the Gothic styles by men of all political and religious creeds, for buildings of every possible variety. When we see Gothic edifices rising everywhere, no matter for what purpose, or however absurd in their details and proportions, it is impossible to doubt that the association of Middle-Age architecture with the ancient creed of England does materially diminish the popular Protestant hostility to that creed in the case of those temperaments which are easily affected by such associations. In my own case, they simply tended to stimulate an interest in the actual working of the living Roman communion. There is a certain passage in Webster's

'Duchess of Malfi' which had always haunted me from my boyhood—

> 'I do love these ancient ruins;
> We never set our foot upon them but we tread
> Upon some reverend history.'

Every relic of the past was always, to me, instinct with the bygone life of humanity. Everywhere I felt the presence of the 'reverend history;' and the past was, in my mind, only the hidden parent of the present. And thus it was that, while I had not as yet the faintest suspicion that the Roman claims deserved even serious attention, my aversion to Rome, as an ecclesiastical organisation, was slowly passing away.

CHAPTER VII.

AND thus time went on, term followed term, and vacation vacation, and found me still untroubled by any serious doubts as to my duties to the Church of England. I did not mix intimately with many of the more decided adherents of the new theology, but of course it was impossible to live altogether in ignorance of their ways and of the spread of their opinions. But I remained a thorough Protestant in my method of looking at controverted questions; and so far as theories of Church government were concerned, I adopted that which used to be called, somewhat incorrectly, the Erastian idea of the functions of the clerical office.

All the while I very much enjoyed the characteristic Oxford life of the undergraduates of those days. I associated with a good many men, always of the respectable sort, and belonging to various sets and various colleges; and it may surprise some persons to be told that it was the rarest thing in the world, in any of these sets, to hear a syllable uttered which might not with full propriety have been uttered in any fairly tolerant ladies' society in England. Of course, things were totally different in

other sets, and there was a vast difference between the tone of one college, as a whole, and that of another. The very appearance of the rooms indicated marked differences in habits of thought and gentlemanliness in colleges of different reputations, whether in intelligence or in social standing.

Altogether, I can safely say, that so far as my own experience went, the influence of the Oxford of that period was favourable to the cultivation of high principles of conduct, and that this influence was not confined to the limits of any one school of theological opinion, nor to the comparatively small numbers of those who, like myself, were positively reading men. I was devoted to the river, and went upon it nearly every day, but in the case of nearly all with whom I there associated, it was a most innocent amusement, and in no way interfered with the hours of reading. It was the same with the Union Debating Society, whose discussions in those days were kept up by most of the ablest of the undergraduates of the best colleges. It exercised a thoroughly beneficial influence upon its members, and would sometimes convert the idlest men to something like industry and activity of thought, while they remained totally unaffected by the regular University system and teaching.

Being, as I have said, a thorough Protestant in matters of Church government and in my principles of biblical

interpretation, I had more sympathy both for the half-liberal theology of Whately and Arnold, and for the Oxford modification of the evangelical theology, than for the new and more vigorous High Church views. Against this last system the mild liberalism of that day made little head. It was tentative, eclectic, and wanting in enthusiasm, and had no chance against the resolute and ascetic consistency of the system of the "Tracts for the Times." It was also thoroughly alien to the dominant Anglican and Conservative tone of Oxford thought. There might be a question as to whether the theology of the Tracts was Scriptural, and in harmony with the Thirty-nine Articles; but there could be no doubt that Oxford offered no natural home for the liberalism of thirty or forty years ago.

And it was almost the same with the Low Church party. Whatever support they might derive from the apparent harmony of the Thirty-nine Articles with the Evangelical system, the traditional life of Oxford was as profoundly antagonistic to their modes of thought as were the baptismal and ordination services in the Prayer Book. Evangelicalism thus fought at a disadvantage peculiar to the University, and, so far as it propagated itself, it was for the most part in a timid and modified form, its extreme adherents being few, and almost shut out from all participation in the intellectual and social life of the

time. It soon began further to modify itself, by adopting such elements of the High Church theology as did not definitely clash with its notions on justification, grace, and the like. It coquetted with the dogma of the Apostolical Succession, as furnishing an admirable hypothesis for defending itself against the Dissenters. It was so easy to hold with Luther and Calvin on such mysteries as original sin and the conditions of salvation, and at the same time to believe in the peculiar sacredness of episcopal ordination, that it was not wonderful that to this extent the new opinions had a charm for the most Evangelical minds.

At that date, too, there existed in the Church a special proclivity towards the adoption of the dogma of the Apostolical Succession, which is not easily realised by those who have breathed only the theological atmosphere of the present day. And yet it was through these very proclivities that so many ardent souls were ultimately led, through the preliminary reception of that dogma, to submit to the exclusive claims of Rome itself. It is the fashion now for Churchmen of all kinds to fraternise with Dissenters on many occasions with an almost ostentatious readiness. The term 'Dissenters' itself has been nearly supplanted by the term 'Nonconformists,' which the Dissenters themselves have long preferred to use. Just in the same way it is now the fashion

to speak of the 'celebration' of the Holy Communion, instead of its 'administration,' which was the universal term in former days; the new word being the result of the spread of a belief in the essential sacrificial character of the Eucharist.

But when the Oxford movement began, the attitude of Churchmen towards Dissenters was unaffected by that liberalism which lies at the root of our present fraternisings. The earlier Evangelicals had singularly little sympathy with the characteristic spiritual tone of Anglicanism, and recognised 'spiritually-minded' Dissenters as their 'Christian brethren,' while they utterly denied the real brotherhood of such Churchmen as rejected their own views of doctrine and duty. Whenever it was possible, they preferred the extemporary praying of the Dissenters to the dull formality, as they called it, of the devotions of the Prayer-Book. They looked upon the notion of a visible church claiming to be of really Divine origin, as a deadly and papistical invention of those who would substitute outward moral correctness for the spiritual life of the regenerate soul. And they held that the pious dissenting preacher was every whit as truly called by grace to the ministerial office, as if he had been ordained by episcopal hands.

After a while, these ideas began to change. Circumstances were too strong for doctrinal prepossessions, and

evangelical clergymen often found themselves in something like collision with their dissenting 'Christian brethren.' Certain divergences of feeling began to show themselves between the partisans of extempore and those of written prayers, and between the members and the enemies of a State Church as such. Low Church principles became 'genteel,' Low Church bishops sat upon the bench, Low Church ladies and gentlemen began to mix in general society. And thus their creed itself was modified, and the relations between the Low Church clergy and the dissenters grew less cordial than before. The Dissenters refused to acknowledge the merits of the Church, while Low Churchmen discovered that the Anglican liturgy was eminently 'Scriptural' and 'spiritual.'

Here, then, at this juncture, the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession presented itself as supplying a most opportune ground for self-defence against dissenting pretensions. Here was a proof that whatever might be the position of the 'converted' dissenting minister, the position of the 'converted' episcopal clergyman was absolutely unassailable. Here, again, was an unfailing guarantee against all irregularities, and fanatical license, and self-willed extravagance. Before the Tracts had been many years in existence, a certain phrase was invented by a leading London Evangelical incumbent,

who was captivated by the charms of the Succession theory, which used to afford us no little amusement in the later days of my Oxford life. It was the distinguishing mark of the Church of England, he said, that it upheld 'evangelical truth and Apostolical order.' Arlington, in particular, was never tired of laughing at this wonderful phrase.

'What!' he used to say, 'is evangelical truth a sort of mischievous, dangerous firework, that has to be shut up in the iron safe of Apostolical order, to prevent it from doing more harm than good in the world?'

'But surely,' I said to him one day, when he was talking in this way, 'order is necessary in religious things, and one must suppose that the Apostles laid down certain rules, and appointed a regular ministry for the preaching of the gospel.'

'My dear fellow,' he replied, 'that's not the question. Don't you see the absurdity of putting doctrine and discipline upon two separate foundations? The Christian Church was set up by Christ just as truly as Christian doctrines were taught by Him. You can't draw a line between the two things, and call one of them evangelical and the other Apostolical.

'Is that the view taught by our soundest divines?' I asked him, with no satirical meaning, but honestly asking for information.

'Our soundest divines are more or less of the nature of impostors,' he replied.

'Who does teach it, then?' I asked.

'Rome!' he exclaimed emphatically.

He said this to me one Sunday morning, when we met, coming out of St Mary's, where a sermon had been preached upholding something like this new adaptation of the old Low Church theory to the necessities of the time. As it happened, I was engaged to go that same day to a sort of evening meeting for religious discussion, which was got up by way of profitably spending the Sunday evenings, by a small number of the more reasonable and cultivated of the younger Evangelicals. Stories used to be current concerning the proceedings at similar meetings of the more extreme members of the party in a well-known third-rate college, which possessed no other title to distinction in the University. But I knew of such gatherings only by vague reports. I dare say those who frequented them were as narrow in their ideas as they were uncharitable in their judgments, and unpleasant in their artificial solemnity. Certainly, as a body, the Low Church school in Oxford never did common justice to the upholders of the Tracts, and they could not conceive it possible that a man who believed in baptismal regeneration, practised fasting, and observed Saints' Days, could be

anything better than an unspiritual and unconverted formalist.

The meeting this evening numbered only some five or six bachelors and undergraduates, together with a young master of arts, who had lately been ordained to a curacy in one of the Oxford parishes. He had come up to Oxford at a rather later age than is usual, and must have been not far from thirty at the time I am speaking of. He had now become the Reverend George Verner, and had attained the object of his ambition and his honest desires to do good.

Proceedings began with an ordinary tea-drinking of the usual undergraduate fashion; and if there was a certain air of self-conscious gravity, and the smallest possible tendency to 'unctuousness,' it was scarcely perceptible. All were more or less of the same type, and made no secret of their opinions. There was nothing sanctimonious in the talk while the tea-drinking lasted; and when it was over, and the business of the evening began, it was with none of that Pharisaical affectation which is popularly attributed to such gatherings. Altogether it favourably contrasted with some of the regular 'clerical meetings' at which I was present in after years, and which in those days were not the common and business-like affairs which they have now become. I suppose that at that time it was a thing unheard of in any

school, except the Evangelical, that people, even clergymen, should kneel down together in a room, and offer prayers, as a preliminary and conclusion to some theological discussion or Bible reading. Now all is changed; but at the period I am describing it was impossible for half a dozen men, whether young or old, to meet for such purposes without being conscious of the singularity of their doings, and without some slight esteem of themselves as the very salt of the earth.*

* Since writing the above I have met with a passage in Hare's 'Memorials of a Quiet Life,' which I cannot help quoting, as strikingly illustrating the clerical habits and prepossessions of the very period which I am recalling. 'Augustus Hare,' says the narrative, 'united with his brother clergy in the Vale of Pewsey, in Wiltshire, in forming a clerical society, one object which he felt to be specially needed, being the removal of prejudices and lessening of party feeling in the minds of all towards each other, and the enabling those who were young in their profession to benefit by the experience of their elders. Many difficulties arose from the difference of opinion that prevailed among the members as to the propriety of beginning their meetings with prayer, and to the nature of that preparatory prayer. The High Churchmen were strongly prejudiced against any use of prayer on such occasions, from a notion of its likeness to dissenting societies; the zealous Evangelicals urged the advantages of extempore prayer as fitted for the peculiar circumstances of the time or place, and they resolutely refused to agree in the formation of any society for clerical purposes that did not adopt *some* form of worship at its beginning. The middle course that Hare took was to propose the selection of suitable prayers from the Liturgy, alleging that they might in this way approach as nearly as the spirit of the times would admit of to the habits of the olden times, when Divine service used daily to be

What were the prayers used on this my first introduction to so novel a proceeding I can scarcely remember. They certainly included sundry collects from the Prayer-Book; and these collects were followed by an extemporary prayer by Verner. It was painfully solemn in tone, and, as I now think, unnatural. But I have heard far worse in after days. It was, at the same time, perfectly clear from what he said when upon his knees, that Verner intended to testify pretty strongly against Tractarianism as soon as he should be seated upon his chair.

After the prayer was finished, a part of a chapter of the Epistle to the Romans was read aloud in Greek. It was the famous passage in the eighth chapter, on the calling of the predestinate.

'Yes,' exclaimed Verner, as soon as the passage had been read in English as well as in Greek, 'there are people who would suppress or gloss over this teaching of Paul's, and substitute for it this frightful formalism, which is now poisoning half the colleges in Oxford.'

'Don't you think this rather a difficult chapter, Mr Verner?' mildly suggested a timid-looking man, who seemed to tremble as he spoke.

performed in the church. After much discussion, and the lapse of a year, in which all parties drew nearer together, the society was formed, chiefly through his instrumentality, upon the plan he had suggested.

'All things are difficult, Mr Jones,' said Verner, 'until our hearts are enlightened by grace. But what I was going to remark was this, that here we have a complete refutation of the soul-destroying figment of baptismal regeneration.'

The listeners look puzzled, but Verner went on.

'Read Paul's words again,' he said, '"whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Where is the mention of baptism here? And yet here are we being taught in the University pulpit itself, that we are saved by baptism. What an awful delusion! Is not this the fulfilment of the prophecy in Thessalonians, "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness?"'

There was a general murmur throughout the room, which seemed to imply a somewhat partial agreement with this very strong statement.

'Baptismal regeneration is a fearful delusion, undoubtedly,' observed Davison, a shrewd-looking man, who had a most ludicrous trick of blinking his eyes as he spoke, giving one the idea that he was rather enjoying the awkward questions which he was in the habit of putting, as I afterwards learnt was the fact.

'A most fearful delusion,' responded Verner, interrupting him.

'But I should hardly say,' continued Davison, 'that every one will be damned who holds it.'

'It is a damnable doctrine,' retorted Verner, 'and what must be the effect of holding damnable doctrines upon the souls of those who hold them?'

'Would you say that the text in Thessalonians applied to ——, and ——, and ——?' asked Davison, blinking violently; 'I am the strongest of Protestants myself, and I detest their theology; but somehow I can hardly think that they have pleasure in unrighteousness.'

'The righteousnesses of the unregenerate are filthy rags,' rejoined Verner.

'And so are the righteousnesses of the regenerate,' remarked another, who had not spoken, and to whose countenance and manner I felt an immediate aversion. 'We are all worthless in God's sight, and there is nothing but faith that can save us.'

'Very true, very true,' said Davison; 'but you must allow me to repeat that I think that some of those who preach bad doctrines are good men.'

'Good before man, but not good before God,' ejaculated Verner. 'And I repeat,' he continued, 'that this baptismal figment is simply Popery. It is the belief in the *opus operatum* which is the foundation of all the

Romish priestcraft, and has filled hell with millions of lost souls.'

'Yet I am told that some of the men who hold it are very hard-working clergymen among the poor,' suggested the meek man, who had once before spoken.

'My dear young friend,' replied Verner, 'let me give you a brotherly caution in good time. Can you believe that it would rescue a sinner from the grasp of Satan to tell him that he was regenerated in baptism? A clergyman may labour hard among the poor, and yet save not even his own soul, much less theirs. Did not the Romish missionaries labour hard among the heathen, trusting in their own righteousness, and preaching idolatry instead of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God?'

'But do you think it impossible for Catholics to be saved?' I here ventured to ask. 'Think of Pascal, and Quesnel, and Fénélon, and many others.'

'Do not call them Catholics, Mr Seymour,' replied Verner; 'call them Romanists or Papists. In reply to what you ask, I admit that such men may be saved, but then it must be because they trusted in the cross of Christ alone, and rejected their own Romish superstitions.'

'That seems rather an inconsistent view,' remarked Davison. 'If they rejected the Romish creed, and yet professed to hold it, they must have been hypocrites.'

Verner looked surprised, but soon recovered himself, and replied that every man who renounced his own righteousness and clung to the cross by faith, trusting only to the Saviour's blood, would be saved.

'I think that is not quite Scriptural,' rejoined Davison, blinking harder than ever.

'But I thought you were utterly opposed to all legalism, Mr Davison,' said Verner. 'I thought all of us here this evening were untainted by these unhappy views.'

'Pardon me,' said Davison; 'I am as opposed to all legalism as it is possible to be, but I have a horror of anything like antinomianism. And I wish I could see my way clearly about this question of baptism. I confess I should be glad to have a good explanation of what Peter says about baptism saving us in his first epistle. If it were in his second epistle, we might get over the difficulty by adopting Dr Arnold's idea that it was not written by Peter at all.'

'Is that really true?' exclaimed Verner, with a look of horror. 'I was aware that Dr Arnold's views on the Gospel doctrines were lamentably defective, but I did not know that he went so far as to deny the inspiration of any portion of the Scriptures. "All Scripture," says Paul, "is given by inspiration of God." And it is that which distinguishes it from the tradition of men, and

the philosophy and vain deceit against which Paul warned the Colossians.'

What more he said in this strain I hardly noticed; I was so suddenly struck with what Davison had said about Dr Arnold and the Second Epistle of Peter. On the whole, I do not think that anything I had heard of a controversial cast since I had been at Oxford had made so deep an impression upon me as this fresh announcement. It was an entirely new conception to me, that any clergyman should question the correctness of any statement in the Bible which I had been accustomed to reverence. The authorship attributed to each portion of the New Testament appeared to me to be essentially bound up with the authenticity of the writings themselves. When, years before, I had studied Paley's famous "Horæ Paulinæ," I had simply been surprised that he omitted all reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews; but I was ignorant of the opinions of critics as to the real authorship of that epistle. Davison's assertion thus came upon me with all the force of a startling novelty, and the first shadow of real doubt began to darken my hitherto confiding belief.

After a little more talk, however, to which I gave but little heed, my attention was once more riveted by the sudden introduction of another topic which was quite as new to me as any critical question concerning the

authorship of the books of the New Testament. Pattison, a man who had as yet hardly spoken, broke into the conversation with the remark that it was the unfaithfulness of evangelical preachers themselves that paved the way for the reception of the deadly doctrine of justification by works, which was taught by the Tractarians.

'What do you mean, Mr Pattison?' asked Verner sharply.

'I mean,' said Pattison, 'that it is because of their own hostility to the blessed truth that it is only through the imputation of Christ's righteousness that we are saved, that the flagrant legalism of the High Church party gains ground as it does.'

'I don't believe in the doctrine of imputed righteousness myself in the smallest degree,' interrupted Davison, in a slightly scornful tone.

'And I, on the contrary,' rejoined Pattison, 'hold that it is the very keystone of the glorious gospel.'

'Of course you are aware, Mr Pattison,' said Verner, 'that your opinion is not shared by some of those who have been most deeply enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and this is, surely, one of those cases in which we may apply the text, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."'

'I am not condemning those gracious souls who

differ from me,' rejoined Pattison; 'but I maintain that the poison of legalism and self-righteousness can only be kept out by an absolute trust in the Redeemer's righteousness alone.'

'Do we not all trust in Christ's blood?' I ventured to ask, not by any means seeing the drift of the dispute.

'You may trust in the Saviour's blood for pardon,' replied Pattison, 'and yet not trust in his imputed holiness as fitting you for that presence of God into which nothing that is defiled can enter.'

'Are we not made fit for that presence by God's grace making us holy?' I asked.

I spoke with some degree of deference, as Pattison was a few years older than myself, though he had not taken his degree; and in fact it was whispered that he was rather afraid of going into the schools, and had good reason for disparaging what he called carnal learning. He answered me with decision.

'I look upon such an opinion as almost as dangerous as this very baptismal heresy itself,' he said. 'Pray, how can we, miserable sinners to the last, ever be made fit for the all holy presence of God? Our guilt is washed away in the atoning blood of Jesus, and then we are clothed in the white garment of his infinitely perfect righteousness.'

'But,' I continued, gathering courage as I went on,

and seeing that he by no means commanded the assent of the whole room; 'are we right in expecting to be saved unless we repent of our sins, and have begun to do right?'

'There you speak incorrectly, Mr Seymour,' interposed Verner. 'You must not say anything that implies that repentance and good works are the conditions of justification. There are no such things as conditions in the gospel scheme. All is of grace, and grace only. We are saved by faith.'

'But is it not a condition that we should have faith?' I said.

'Certainly not,' he replied. 'Faith is the gift of God, freely given, and its essence is that it renounces all conditions.'

'Does it renounce itself as a condition?' I said.

'It clings to the cross,' said Verner, 'and that is all.'

'Pardon me, sir,' Pattison interposed. 'Faith takes hold of Christ's perfect righteousness also, and appropriates it. And thus, and thus only, all is of grace, from first to last.'

'But,' I said, determined, if possible, to get at Pattison's real view, 'do you mean that when God admits us to heaven, He does not care whether we have been really made holy or not? Would not this imply that He was deceived by a fiction?'

'Not more so,' Pattison instantly replied, 'than when He imputes the Saviour's sufferings to us in place of our own.'

'Still I cannot agree with you,' Verner said, 'I cannot see the doctrine of imputed righteousness in the Scripture. As to our own good works, are they not all filthy rags? But nevertheless, they must necessarily follow from a saving faith.'

'Are you quite clear about good works being filthy rags?' asked Davison. 'I am afraid that Evangelical writers sometimes speak rather loosely on this point.'

'Scripture calls them so, Mr Davison,' said Verner; 'and indeed you surprise me in doubting it even by supposition.'

'All righteousness,' interrupted Pattison, 'is a filthy rag, and unfit for clothing the nakedness of the soul, except the infinitely perfect righteousness of Christ.'

'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' murmured the quiet man who had spoken early in the discussion, and scarcely at all since.

'Yes!' ejaculated Pattison, 'and it is another sign of the lukewarmness and backsliding of professing Christians, that they sometimes now talk of degrees in the sinner's guilt, as if there could be degrees in that which is infinite.'

'Come, come, Pattison,' observed Davison, 'I think

your reading of the old divines has driven you a little to extremes. Surely, among us all, before we are regenerated, some are more guilty than others.'

'That doctrine is nothing less than damnable,' retorted Pattison.

'We know, of course, that every man is born of sin, and a child of wrath, and deserving of eternal misery,' said Davison. 'At the same time, even in the unregenerate there are degrees of wickedness.'

'You are a mathematician, Davison,' replied Pattison.

'Well,' said Davison, 'what of that?'

"I don't know much of mathematics myself,' said Pattison; 'but I understand this: that there cannot be greater or lesser degrees in infinity. If a thing is infinite, you cannot say that it is more or less infinite.'

'Certainly,' said Davison.

'Now then,' replied Pattison, 'does not all sin deserve God's wrath and damnation? Does it not deserve an eternal punishment?'

'Unquestionably,' said Davison.

'And why?' Pattison asked.

'Because it is an offence against an infinitely holy and powerful God,' said Davison.

'Then my conclusion follows,' retorted Pattison. 'If every single sin deserves an eternal punishment, all sins must be equally black and deadly. They all deserve

hell-fire for ever. This is the very foundation of the gospel salvation. A single sinful thought is enough to damn the soul eternally; and all our natural thoughts are sinful. Any other doctrine is absolute Popery.'

'I don't see how you can safely say that,' said Davison, 'for I believe the Church of Rome holds the doctrine of human corruption just as the Church of England does.'

'We have nothing to do with what the Church of Rome or the Church of England holds,' retorted Pattison. 'The question is, what says the Scripture? Of course I regard the Church of England as a Scriptural Church, though I deplore the Popish element in the baptismal and ordination services.'

'Well,' said Verner, who seemed uncomfortable at remaining so long silent; 'for my part, I so far agree with you, Mr Pattison, that I hold that the moment we begin to draw distinctions between one sin and another in the unregenerate, we are falling into that Romish error which is denounced in the Thirteenth Article, one of the most Scriptural of the whole Thirty-nine.'

He then opened a Prayer-Book, and read aloud the Article in question. It did not seem to me that the Article really bore the meaning he attributed to it, but in those days I was not learned in the niceties of theological language, and I felt that I was no match for

the positiveness of men like Verner and Pattison. All I ventured on was to suggest the opinion, which I had always heard recognised in my father's society, that there are great moral differences between those who are classed together as heathens.

'That is a fearful theory, Mr Seymour,' Verner replied. 'Every thought, and feeling, and action of the unregenerate soul is sinful, and deserves eternal damnation. And it is the same with you yourself, if you are not yet renewed by the Holy Spirit; every thought in your heart, and every act of your life, is stained with rebellion against God; and you can only be saved by renouncing your own righteousness, and clinging to the cross with a justifying faith.'

I suppose I must have looked considerably uncomfortable at this personal turn in the conversation. Certainly I felt intensely hot, and not a little angry and perplexed, at the sudden presentation to me of a view concerning myself which was at least perfectly novel. At any rate, Davison seemed to think that Verner was too hard upon me, for he at once turned the discussion by asking him what he thought was the duty of a young clergyman in visiting the sick.

'I know that my friends,' he added, 'sometimes think I pay too much attention to the subtleties of the Tracts writers, and that I am much given to argument in spirit-

ual things. But then, you know, I like to see my way clearly in everything; and as I shall soon take orders on a curacy in my own county, I am a little puzzled about some things in the Prayer-Book. Now, as an experienced man, what would you advise as to the service for the Visitation of the Sick?'

'Nothing on earth should ever induce me to use such a soul-destroying relic of Popery,' retorted Verner most emphatically.

He spoke, in fact, so vigorously, that for a few moments every one was silenced; and when the conversation was resumed, it was so general that I had time to collect my thoughts in the midst of the buzz that filled the room.

At that time I knew nothing about the general practices of clergymen when they saw sick people, and I had done nothing more than glance once or twice at the service in question. My notion was that all clergymen used the Prayer-Book offices as part of their professional work. As it had never occurred to me to consider whether all my own thoughts and actions were, or were not, stained with deadly sin, simply believing that I sometimes did right and sometimes did wrong, so it was with these purely clerical details. It was, therefore, somewhat startling to hear a zealous clergyman like Verner denounce an important portion of the Prayer-

Book as a soul-destroying relic of Popery. Every one in the room, too, except Davison, appeared to be of Verner's opinion, that no spiritually-minded minister could possibly repeat the absolution which is enjoined in the Visitation Service.

'God forbid,' exclaimed Pattison, 'that I, a miserable sinner, should profess to absolve my fellow-sinners from their guilt! God alone can forgive sins, and when the soul is renewed and seeks forgiveness through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, how dares an impious man to pretend to come in as a go-between?'

'Of course such a thing is not to be thought of for a moment,' said Davison. 'What I want to do is to find some way of answering these Tractarians, who are always harping upon one's promises to observe the rules of the Prayer-Book.'

'Why should you trouble yourselves about the false subtleties of the unregenerate?' replied Verner.

'We should follow the leadings of the Spirit,' observed Pattison, 'in this and in all things.'

'Well,' rejoined Davison, 'I confess that I do feel some difficulty about subscribing to these same baptismal, and ordination, and visitation services. Sometimes I doubt whether I shall ever be ordained after all.

'I seriously trust you will not be thus unfaithful, Mr Davison,' said Verner anxiously. 'The Church has

now more need than ever for the services of a faithful ministry; and as you have received grace yourself, you are bound to give yourself to the saving of the souls of others.'

'But can't one save people's souls elsewhere?' asked Davison. 'I might join some Church where I should be free to preach without let or hindrance.'

'Most solemnly I entreat you, my dear young friend,' replied Verner, 'to beware of any such hasty step. Be assured that all such doubts are the temptation of Satan, who desires to draw you from the plain path of duty. At such times you have only to remember the Scriptural injunction, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This is just the advice which I gave to a young parishioner of mine, who was tempted with doubts about the Bible. He was not satisfied unless he knew all the history of its different parts, and why the Apocrypha is to be rejected. I saw that it was only a temptation of Satan, who desired to draw him from the study of the fulness of the gospel, and I warned him accordingly. He has been free from the temptations ever since; at least he has said nothing about them to me, and I have no doubt that he has been delivered from them.'

'Now that is exactly another point,' said Davison, 'on which I feel difficulty. What is a clergyman to do when any of his people don't believe in the Bible? I

understand the evidences of Christianity, as I have learned them from Paley and others, and I shall of course get up the history of the Bible for ordination. But from what I've seen of the poor in the country and in London, I don't much fancy they will care much for these sort of arguments. You know I have belonged to one or two visiting societies, and to tell you the truth, I never could get on with the working men when it came to these sort of difficulties.'

'It is not a case for argument at all,' replied Verner sententiously.

'How so?' asked Davison. 'Surely every man must be able to show a good reason for the faith that is in him. The Bible itself says so.'

'Such objectors as you mention,' said Verner, 'can be convinced by nothing but the power of the Spirit, humbling the soul for its sin, and driving it to seek mercy at the foot of the cross.'

'That is true enough,' said Davison; 'but how am I to convince them that what the Bible says is true, when they won't believe it?'

'I am told,' I here interposed, 'that the Roman Catholic priests have a way of getting over the perplexities of objectors by saying that the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth, as St Paul tells Timothy.'

'The devil can always quote Scripture to his own

advantage,' rejoined Verner. 'If he tempted Christ himself with texts of God's own Word, it is easy enough for the Romish priests to do the same.'

'Well,' remarked Davison, 'I must confess that I myself see some little difficulty in that very passage from Timothy. I know you think I am too fond of perfect consistency in all things.'

'All God's dealings with man are a mystery!' here ejaculated Pattison. 'Where all is mysterious, how can we hope to be consistent with ourselves?'

'Allow me to finish what I was saying,' pursued Davison; 'you hold, of course, that St Paul was inspired.'

'God forbid that I should doubt it!' exclaimed Verner.

'Then he must certainly have had some meaning when he called the Church the pillar and ground of the truth. Now, what was his meaning?'

'I see no difficulty in it whatever,' said Verner. 'The Church was the pillar and ground of the truth in those days, because she was pure and Apostolic, and St Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit. But all Churches are now fallen away more or less from the gospel purity, and they teach error as much as truth.'

'What, then, are we to do, sir?' I asked, with a sense of bewilderment creeping rapidly over me.

'We must search the Scriptures,' said Verner, 'because

they testify of Christ; and trust to Divine grace to bless them to our souls.'

'But how shall we know anything about the Scriptures first of all?' I asked.

'The Bible is its own evidence,' Verner answered. 'Outward evidence and historical proofs are for the carnal mind. When the soul is once convinced of sin and feels its need of a Redeemer, it rejoices in the fulness of Christ's salvation, and knows indeed that the Bible is the Word of God, and the most precious of treasures.'

'Then you agree with what somebody said the other day,' observed Davison, 'that external evidences are for the sinner, and internal evidences for the saint.'

'Certainly,' said Verner, 'and until Divine grace touches the hardened soul and works in it a conviction of sin, all evidences are useless. When the conscience is awakened, and the blessed promises of the gospel are appropriated by faith, then the Bible is its own interpreter, and Christ alone shines forth from every page upon the believer's heart.'

Soon after this the discussion closed, and after a brief prayer we all separated. I attended one or two more of the Sunday evening meetings of the same little society; but the general tone of the conversation was much the same. It was plain to me that Davison, Verner, and Pattison represented three very distinct phases of evan-

gelical thought. Each had clearly his own peculiar tests which he brought to bear upon questions of theology and of Biblical interpretation; and in after-years each took a course of his own, in exact accordance, as I then perceived, with the nature of these tests. Verner remained a steady member of the Established Church, but became somewhat less hostile to the High Church party as time went on, though his Protestantism always remained strenuous, both in word and in feeling. Pattison took orders in a diocese where he was surrounded with influences, partly zealous and Tractarian, and partly of the old-fashioned port-wine school of clericalism. He was at length so disgusted with everything about him that he left the Church and joined the Plymouth Brethren. Davison never took orders at all. His passion for perfect symmetry of opinion, and his honest wish to leave no objection unanswered, made it impossible for him to pledge himself as unreservedly to the Prayer-Book and Articles as was then thought necessary for all candidates for ordination. He remained a layman, and soon developed into that terror of platform orators and speakers at clerical meetings—a thorough Protestant, who insists upon making every man give a definite meaning to every rhetorical sentence that he utters.

CHAPTER VIII.

UPON myself the effect of these few Sunday evening discussions was a revival of my flagging interest in the profoundly antagonistic doctrinal differences in the various schools of the day. Unquestionably, the evangelical modes of viewing Christian teaching seemed to me more real and powerful than were the Tractarian views on matters more purely ecclesiastical in their nature. They made me feel a more definite interest in the personal application of such subjects as original sin, grace, the atonement, and justification, than I had hitherto thought possible. At the same time, the endless variations and uncertainties of Anglicanism came to be a more and more clearly recognised fact in my thoughts, ready to form the basis of a new controversial superstructure when my mind should be more advanced, and should be able to grasp the subject with more completeness of apprehension.

The Tractarian system, as an ascetic and spiritual guide, remained totally without beauty or charm to my conscience. As a matter of taste, I disliked more and more the unæsthetic coarsenesses and vulgarities of the

Anglicanism of that day; and, argumentatively, they were coming to be associated in my mind with undevotional worldliness in certain sections of the clergy. But for years to come my real allegiance to the Church, as a Christian institution, remained as unshaken as ever. My mind was merely collecting the materials for a new superstructure of belief, whose foundations were not as yet even marked out, much less absolutely laid.

Verner himself, as I afterwards found, was one of those men whose real character it would have been unfair to judge from the displays they make when discussing religious and controversial subjects. The moment a theological antagonist appeared in view, all his peculiar susceptibilities were aroused, and he seemed utterly to forget that there is such a thing as Christian charity which it may be one's duty to exercise towards an opponent. He could not comprehend how any man could be a Christian at all who did not adopt his views on justification and original sin, or how any man could really hold those views who did not give them that exclusive prominence in his teaching which he himself considered to be right. He fairly represented the majority of the Low Church school of the day, who most honestly believed that the advocates of the Tractarian theology were no better than worldly-minded Pharisees of the Roman type.

To do him justice, it was necessary to know him as a hard-working parish clergyman. In conversing in his own rooms and in his intercourse with the poor, his bitter controversialism grew comparatively mild. If he did not alter his theological opinions, he brought them forth with more consideration for others. His views of detailed duties were of the rigid Puritanical kind; but he practically recognised the existence of duty, as duty, with a fulness which was thoroughly inconsistent with his professed doctrinal theories as to the relation between God and man. I saw him occasionally in private, and heard him now and then preach; and my wonder was that he seemed so absolutely incapable of seeing anything of real, spiritual religiousness in the teachers of the Tractarian party.

In one respect he was at once extremely like and extremely unlike certain members of that school. His manner was habitually solemn, and it was solemn with that peculiar solemnity which distinguished the Evangelicals from the High Churchmen of the day, and which is equally unlike any of those varieties of professional mannerism with which I afterwards became familiar in the Roman Church. These varieties of mannerism, both Protestant and Catholic, in time became with me a curious subject of study, as indicating the various theological influences under which they grew up. To a

certain extent, also, they offer suggestions as to the soundness of the various forms of theological belief which create them. So far as they warp the outward bearing and speech, and interfere with what would otherwise be the natural and healthy expression of an inward natural and healthy development of the faculties, so far they may be taken as really indicating something essentially wrong and false in the views of men themselves.

The solemnity of the High Church and the Evangelical schools of the early period of the Tractarian movement was alike, in so far as it was the result of an intense self-consciousness, and of a conviction that it was right that the world should see some definite outward proofs of the intense seriousness produced by their respective religious views. But with the typical Low Churchman the one chief aim was to be impressive, and to produce a converting and edifying influence upon others. His manner was a species of perpetual sermon, exhorting all men to become what he was, accompanied with a perpetual condemnation of all worldly frivolities, and a testifying against the ways of worldly people in general. The typical High Churchman of the new school, on the other hand, seemed habitually overpowered with the awfulness of sacred things, with the dread of handling religious topics profanely, and with the fear lest his own sins should not be forgiven. It was a solemnity more

simple, natural, and unobtrusive than that of the opposite party, and had none of that peculiar air of self-satisfaction which was so unpleasant in certain examples of their body. Solemn as was the manner of both Winston and Verner, and ready as was Winston to be 'shocked' by things really harmless, I never found his gravity, or that of others who were like him, so repellent as was that of men like Verner. I disliked it, for I thought it was founded on false ideas as to the relation between God and man; but I respected it as genuine and unpharisaical, and it strengthened in me the belief that he, and such as he, were thoroughly in earnest, and that their creed was one which must exert a powerful influence over those who accepted it.

About this time, too, I began frequently to read Keble's 'Christian Year;' and to this book I attribute a slow but ultimately decided lessening of my dislike to that theology which, in its fully-developed completeness, is taught by Rome, and in its modified shape was held by Keble himself, especially in his after-years. But it was precisely because this theology stands almost entirely apart from the poetic and spiritual elements in Keble's verses that it produced this effect. Many of the poems are entirely free from the peculiarities of this theology, while in the remainder the sacramental and sacerdotal views of the theological teacher are often

tacked on to the sweet meditations of the poet by some forced and artificial link which is easily broken by the non-Tractarian reader. To this day the charm of those non-dogmatic portions of the 'Christian Year' is to me as great as it ever was; while not a few of them exhibit an insight into the depths of the religious life, and the fearful struggles of the soul, which is extraordinary in a writer so young as Keble was when he wrote them. It is, indeed, through this same characteristic of the 'Christian Year' that its popularity and influence in the English Church have been so widely spread and lasting, and that it has supplied a wholesome spiritual nourishment to hundreds of thousands who would instantly have been repelled, had its doctrinal elements been more prominently presented.

Its effect upon myself was simply that of associating the Tracts theology with its exquisitely refined and affectionate spiritual teaching. As Keble came to be recognised as one of the foremost and heartiest supporters of sacramentalism and sacerdotalism in their most extreme development, my old hostility to these views of Christianity was materially softened down. The 'Christian Year' moved the feelings as do the aisles and arches and windows of an old Gothic cathedral, which prove nothing at all argumentatively, but at the same time dispose the mind to study the grand controversy

between Rome and Protestantism more dispassionately than was possible while the Roman system was associated only with the fires of Smithfield, the sales of indulgences, and the scandalous lives of many popes. Tractarianism might be a huge mistake still, but it could hardly be anything very abominable and unscriptural when Keble was one of its three chief teachers. And if a mind such as his could really delight in and accept the views of life and Biblical interpretation which were recognised by the Fathers of the early Church, those Fathers must have some better claim upon our respect than was admitted by the popular Protestantism of the day.

A very different effect was produced upon my mind by much of the other poetry which soon after this time was put forth in advocacy of the new theology. In the *British Magazine* from time to time appeared sets of verses distinctly urging the extreme High Church views in a controversial tone which utterly repelled me, and the more so from the intensely prosaic and laboured thoughts and cramped versification which often disfigured them. These poems, or rather verses, for many of them do not bear the smallest resemblance to poetry, were afterwards collected and published in a volume, and termed the 'Lyra Apostolica.' A few of them are, indeed, among the most perfect and touching little poems to which Christian thought has ever given birth,

while in those which are admitted to be Keble's, the charm of the 'Christian Year' is rarely wholly absent. But the volume, in many parts, is the voice of that fierce, gloomy, and intolerant spirit from which, from the first, many of the Tractarian writings were never altogether free, and which, to the last, prevented me from ever cordially sympathising with the progress of the movement. Those writings taught me the way to Rome, but I never could throw myself as a partisan into the practical or doctrinal system of Tractarianism itself.

There is one poem, indeed, in the 'Lyra Apostolica' which is in avowed opposition to Roman doctrine; but which tended, nevertheless, to prepare me for the acceptance in after-years of the very doctrine which it condemns. Its subject is the present life of the saints departed, and it describes that life according to the ordinary Protestant view, with no little poetic beauty; and it helped me materially to contemplate the actual fact of the unseen life, as now lived by the pious dead, as a vivid and profoundly interesting reality. As the volume is not now in very many hands, I may as well quote the two first stanzas:—

'They are at rest:
We may not stir the heaven of their repose
With rude invoking voice, or prayer addrest
In waywardness to those
Who in the mountain grots of Eden lie,
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.

'They hear it sweep
In distance down the dark and savage vale;
But they at rocky bed, or current deep,
Shall never more grow pale;
They hear, and meekly muse, as fain to know
How long untired, unspent, that giant stream shall flow.'

Here, then, is something more than a recognition of the ordinary Protestant denial of the lawfulness of addressing the departed in any sort of invocation. The invocation is argued against on the ground that such praying to them would disturb the perfect peace of their beatific enjoyment. They are occupied, it is stated, in an unchanging contemplation, and the essential element of their joy is a perfect repose and a freedom from all active interest in the affairs of those whom they have left behind them. They only wonder how long the fourfold river of human life will continue to flow, and listen—as the next stanza tells us—to the echoing strains of angels' hymns. Still, they are brought before the mind as real beings, and with more substance than is to be found in the common vague pictures of the happiness of the blessed which English Protestantism occasionally attempts to paint.

That these shadowy sketches are, at the same time, satisfactory to the whole Protestant world, is a notion which, I am convinced, cannot be maintained. There

are very many among the laity, and some among the clergy, for whom the Roman doctrines of purgatory and of the invocation of saints have a very positive attractiveness. First of all, they cannot bring themselves to believe that the soul of a confirmed sinner, however sincere the repentance of his last few hours, does instantly pass into a condition of perfect happiness. They have no defined opinions on the subject, and they are puzzled with sundry texts in the Bible; and, what is more, they are afraid to avow their doubts, even to their nearest friends, through fear of being supposed to be disposed to submit to the claims of Rome. English middle and upper class society is permeated, through and through, with these kinds of hypocrisies. Few men, and still fewer women, have the courage to be open in their speaking on religious subjects. They are unwilling to declare that they are not satisfied with this or that opinion which is current in the party or school to which they themselves belong. And on no one point is that dissatisfaction more common than on this question of the relationship between ourselves and those whom we have loved, and who are now gone 'beyond the veil.'

This dissatisfaction exhibits itself mainly in two very different ways. In its vulgar, credulous, and ludicrous form it becomes a belief in ghosts, and in what is called 'spiritualism.' Considering that no ghost-story has ever

yet stood the test of a severe cross-examination of the original sources on which it rests, and that the spiritualistic manifestations of the day are exhibitions in which imposture combines with childishness, nothing could perpetuate such superstitions were it not that men largely disbelieve the ordinary Protestant theology, which teaches that at the moment of death all intercourse between the living and the dead is absolutely ended.

In its nobler form this dissatisfaction speaks in such poems as Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.' There are few things in all those exquisite stanzas which are more attractive to the sympathetic reader than those in which the poet utters his passionate yearnings after some sort of intercourse between the glorified spirit of Arthur Hallam and the friends who love him, and who cannot bear the thought that he now knows nothing of their sorrows, their recollections, and their daily lives. Like so many other aspirations in the same book, these yearnings are only like the voice of an 'infant crying for the light;' but they are as real and as fervent as if they were the result of the most definitely formed dogmatic convictions.

As I have implied, it was not until I had left Oxford that the verses I have quoted from the 'Lyra' began to lay hold practically upon me. But when they did thus become the familiar expression of what I certainly held

to be more than a beautiful idea, it did not require any remarkable acuteness to detect the extraordinary misconception of the future blessedness which they involve. It might or might not be true that the invocation of the dead is permissible, according to the Bible, or useful, according to probability. But to describe it as a disturbance of their blissful repose is an absurdity. It could be no more a disturbance to their rest than it is a disturbance to us now to be asked by a friend to pray for him. We might as reasonably imagine that the infinite repose and happiness of God Himself is interrupted by our prayers. The sweet picture of the saints in their meditations, assisted by the chants of angels, and unbroken by any intrusive entreaties for their prayers, coming to them from the struggling souls on earth, vanishes like a vision. The common Protestant view may be true, or the Roman view may be true; but it could not possibly be true that if the departed saints can hear us when we beg them to pray for us, they are otherwise than rejoiced to intercede for us with Him whom they see more clearly than we can see Him here ourselves.

Far more definite and advanced was the teaching of the Tracts on the kindred doctrine of prayers on behalf of the dead who are believed to be not yet admitted into the fulness of the beatific vision; and the openness and consistency with which their writers upheld the

patristic theory on this point, tended directly to familiarise my thoughts with a conception of the perfect unity of the Christian Church as an unbroken organisation. No person, indeed, could have adopted the theology of the early Christian liturgies without, at the same time, recognising the duty and the privilege of interceding for the souls of the departed who are held to be still in an unperfected condition. This doctrine, too, was especially connected with the conception of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, in which, in some vague way or other, the sacrifice of the cross was again and again presented to God on behalf of the living and the dead. Of the universality with which this belief in the existence of a purgatorial state was held at the period when it is really possible to know historically what was the real faith of the Church, there is no doubt whatever. Once grant that the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries were substantially in possession of the religious belief taught in the New Testament, and it follows with certainty that such prayers for the dead are right. The Church was often torn with disputes as to the nature of Christ Himself, but so far as I am aware, the whole Church of the Nicene period was agreed as to these intercessions.

To myself, as I left Oxford, wholly unconvinced as to the claims of the Fathers to be accepted as interpreters of Christian doctrine, the fact that they believed in the

efficacy of praying for the dead was a matter of comparative indifference. At the same time, it contributed to enlarge and clear my conceptions of the oneness of the bond which unites all Christians together in Christ simply as a conception. The idea of that organic unity, which afterwards I came to believe must be sought in Rome alone, grew more and more familiar to my imagination. I realised it, so to say, and came to regard the whole Church question solely as a matter for dispassionate argument, and freed from the keen antipathy which it awakens in the popular Protestant mind.

It is right, also, that I should not forget that other softening influence, which, I fully believe, predisposes many others to a temperate examination of the Roman demands; I mean the influence of the music of the Roman Mass, and especially of *Requiem* music. I attribute the diminution of the old anti-Roman bitterness of the English middle and higher ranks, to a certain extent, to that interest in the Mass music of the great composers which has now become general with almost all persons of musical cultivation. The very name of the Mass is, it is true, banished from some of the now frequent public performances of Beethoven's, Mozart's, and Haydn's Church music, as a concession to the ridiculous prudery of English middle-class life. But in every case the idea of the Roman sacrifice of the Mass

is associated with conceptions of purity and beauty; and a very marked lessening in the fervid Protestantism of both singers and audience is the inevitable result. If any person imagines that Mozart's *Requiem*, with its Latin words, can be frequently made a prominent element in a musical festival in an English Cathedral, and have no theological influence upon the country, he is, I think, little aware of the real nature of the springs of human conduct. Once come to love the music, and the mind insensibly ceases to think of the doctrines it expresses with any controversial fierceness. Or, to take another instance, can it be seriously supposed that performers and listeners can enter into the exquisite loveliness of Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*, and retain a shred of the old Protestant hatred of transubstantiation as a God-denying idolatry?

Again, before I left Oxford, I was gradually becoming more definitely conscious of the practical defects of the Anglicanism of the day, in the artistic expression of religious thoughts and emotions. To persons who, like myself, regard the fine arts not merely as a vehicle for awakening agreeable sensations, but as a visible embodiment of those higher aspirations of the mind, by which it declares its conviction that it can have no rest in this dreary round of evil and disappointment, the dismal, prosaic quality of the whole Church practices was an

indication that something was wrong in their fundamental idea. If art has any spiritual meaning at all, it must be pre-eminently the instrument by which the soul expresses her religious convictions, and must enter as an important element into all the public worship of God. If the visible world is but the outward clothing of an invisible perfection, and physical beauty is the reflection of an eternal and uncreated beauty, art, whose highest office it is to give utterance to the profoundest thoughts of the soul in forms of loveliness, is the natural handmaid of religion.

That this use of the artistic idea was universally recognised by Rome, I was well aware; though how far its employment was mingled with frivolous and debasing details I knew not. Every one was familiar with the popular traveller's tales about sacred dolls, and hideous images, and all the vulgarities of popular Continental Catholicism. But all this did not neutralise the fact, that while the highest development of the artistic idea in English churches was to be seen in the Royal Arms, with the correct lion and unicorn, all painted and gilded, and in an occasional dingy picture over the Communion table, the Roman Church systematically employed the resources of art for the utterance of its faith in the invisible.

These thoughts were also quickened into practical

activity, by the acquiescence which I soon yielded to the views of the school of the Tracts, with regard to the common Protestant habit of treating the sermon as the most important element in a religious service. Preaching has nothing whatever to do with art, because it is the mere address of one man to other men, and is complete in itself, and tends to an intolerable self-sufficiency, when regarded as it is regarded by all ultra-Protestant sections of Christendom. Wherever, in fact, men and women come together, wholly or chiefly for the sake of the sermon, no want is felt for the presence of the artistic idea of devout language. A mere audience does not need any language of its own. It comes to listen, not to speak to God in any accents of the soul; consequently, it is in those sections of Christendom where the preaching is held to be more important than the praying that there has been the most open and resolute rejection of all art in religious services. Art has been held to be a mere unspiritual appeal to the senses; and its influence has been denounced as a substitution of sensuous emotion for the pure intercourse of the soul with God. And just in proportion as the love of a carefully arranged liturgy has arisen in any congregation or denomination, accompanied by a less exclusive love for preaching, so has the perception of the function of art in religious worship been understood.

Now, indeed, in this year eighteen hundred and seventy-three, the development of the artistic idea is becoming so frequent in the most unexpected quarters, that it is difficult to realise the intensity of the aversion which it once aroused in Protestants of all denominations. Half a century ago, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, that the more hideous the building, the more spiritual it was supposed was the prayer offered within its walls. The old Anglican 'three decker,' as it is now called in ridicule, was the natural expression of the prevalent notion of ecclesiastical fitness and beauty. A reading desk, from which the clergyman read the prayers to the congregation; while immediately below him a loud-voiced clerk droned out the responses, as a substitute for the voices of the silent audience; the whole surmounted by a towering pulpit, so placed as to command the spectators ranged in deep galleries round three-quarters of the building—this monstrous device was nothing more than an apparatus growing out of the current feelings of the time.

Against this conception of the purposes for which Christians met together in church and chapel the writers of the Tractarian school directed some of their most weighty reasonings and their sharpest ridicule, and both their arguments and their satire had an effect upon thousands of clergy and laity who were never converted

to their theological views. With myself, as I have said, the effect of these arguments and satires was to clear my old dim perceptions as to the value and office of the arts in connection with religion. I gradually came to realise the character of the externals of the old Jewish services in the tabernacle and the temple; and holding that these services were of Divine origin, I came to see how profoundly their fundamental idea was unlike the modern Protestant idea, and the extent of the sanction which they gave to the universal Roman custom. The use of the arts in public worship appeared to me to be one of those minor 'notes of the Church,' which commended themselves to the judgment, as showing that its practical system was based on a recognition of all the existing elements in human nature.

CHAPTER IX.

NO account, however, of the Oxford influences of the time would be complete without some mention of those afternoon sermons preached in St Mary's pulpit by the leader of the whole movement. But for these sermons it is possible, and even probable, that the impression wrought by the Tracts upon the English clergy would have been far feebler and less widely spread than it proved to be. In fact, these most remarkable discourses gave to the movement the force of a religious reformation, while the Tracts, and other similar publications, were the mere vehicles of dogmatic controversy. How attractive these sermons proved, alike to undergraduates, bachelors, and masters, is well remembered by every Oxford man who listened to them. The force with which they told upon the University thought of the day was illustrated by the indignation which they aroused in the old Conservative and the Evangelical authorities of various colleges, some of whom went so far as to alter the Sunday dinner hour, in order to force the younger men to absent themselves from St Mary's, under the penalty of an involuntary fast.

I have no intention of giving any account of these discourses, except so far as to recall one element in their teaching, and in that of the other religious writings of the same school, which tended to predispose me to the acceptance of the Roman view concerning the souls of the departed. This element I found in the persistency with which the Tractarian writers taught that the religious life consists in the formation of permanent habits of thought and action, as distinguished from those violent spasmodic advances which the Low Church party believed in. The perfect fear and love of God, they insisted, is the result of a thousand voluntary efforts, each one tending to establish a steady growth, just as it is true, on the other hand, that '*nemo repente fuit turpissimus.*'

This teaching, again, exactly coincided with the philosophical and practical system which Butler sets forth in his 'Analogy,' and still more at length in his sermons. Butler, at that time, was reverenced in Oxford with a degree of fervour which the young Oxford of to-day can scarcely comprehend. He was venerated as the one chief shining light of Anglican theology, who united Christian teaching with philosophical gifts of the highest order. And chief among the truths which he inculcated was that doctrine of habits, which the new High Churchmen took up and pressed upon their

generation, with all the energy of men bent upon converting the world.

Adopting, then, these views of Butler as unquestionably sound, by degrees they led me to suspect that the common Anglican notion of a sudden and perfect change of mental state, supposed to take place at the moment of death, must be a violation of the fundamental laws which govern the progress of the human soul. If it is true that God causes us, in this world, to advance in the spiritual life by slow degrees, and by the formation of carefully formed habits, how are we to reconcile this law with the fact that most men, even of pious character, die in a very imperfect moral condition? Surely there must be some hidden grain of truth in the old patristic belief in the existence of a state in which 'it is a good and wholesome thing to pray for the dead.' And if it is right to pray for them, then the Church of England must have grievously erred in discouraging, if not forbidding, such prayers. And if England is thus far wrong, surely Rome is thus far right, and she alone recognises the essential nature of the next life as an organic continuance of our present existence. All this, in its germ, was planted in my mind by Butler's views, as interpreted and enforced by the sermons and devotional works of the Tractarian school; though when I left Oxford it was still in the germ only.

Before I did finally leave, I went through the whole of the New Testament critically, for my own private benefit, with no reference to the ordinary College studies, but as considering that I should be doing well to lose no time in making special preparation for taking orders. I worked at the Greek text, with such poor aids as were then available, and made copious notes of my own, settling all such difficulties as I saw with the confident readiness of a youthful critic. At the same time, in those days the agitating Biblical controversies which have since shaken men's minds, were almost unknown. With the aid of the current commentators of the time, I accordingly found no perplexities which seriously troubled me, and was abundantly satisfied with the perfect and even verbal unanimity of the New Testament writings in upholding the theological system to which I had then attained.

I was hard at work one afternoon in this way, when Arlington suddenly strode into my room, after his usual thundering rap at my oak.

'What in the world have you there?' he asked, looking over my shoulder at the notes I was making.

I explained to him what I was doing, asking him whether he did not think it a good preparation for taking orders, as it would enable me to be ready for the bishop's examination as soon as I had taken my degree.

'The very worst thing in the world,' he bluntly exclaimed. 'How do you know in what diocese you will be ordained?'

'What has that to do with the matter?' I asked, considerably surprised.

'Everything,' he rejoined. 'Suppose you have to be examined by a Low Church chaplain, he'll expect explanations of sundry Scripture texts entirely different from those that will be expected by a High Church examiner.'

'But surely,' I said, 'they will all be satisfied with a plain interpretation of the Greek text of the New Testament.'

'You think so, my dear fellow, do you?' he replied. 'And most grievously you're mistaken. I advise you to throw all this Bible criticism to the winds, and study instead the theological text-books in favour with the bishop who is to ordain you. Besides, to tell you the truth, Biblical criticism is poor work after all.'

I was too much amazed to reply, and he went on uninterrupted.

'There's the blessing of belonging to the Roman Church,' he exclaimed; 'they have one recognised theology, and only one; all sorts of text-books, but all agreeing in the main points. What a blight that infamous Reformation was on this unlucky land!'

'Do you seriously mean to say,' I at last took courage to ask, 'that the critical study of the Bible is not a necessary preparation for an English clergyman? How else is he to learn how to teach it to his people?'

'My dear Seymour,' he rejoined, 'do you suppose the Roman Catholic clergy do anything so absurd? Your bibliolatry is quite refreshing in its simplicity.'

I was too angry to reply, except in a few words of indignation, to which he paid no heed, and he continued in the same strain.

'And I suppose,' he said, 'that you have the coolness to tell me that you find no difficulties or discrepancies in your Biblical inquiries?'

'None but what are easily reconciled,' I answered. 'The more I study the original text, the more plain everything appears.'

'Oh, yes,' he cried, 'I understand all that. You are a believer in the comfortable system of interpretation.'

'I believe in nothing of the kind,' I retorted angrily enough.

'Come now,' he went on, with his irritating assumption of superiority, 'let me ask you a question or two.'

'As you please,' I replied.

'Well, then,' he said, 'how do you know the Bible is true, after all?'

'Why, of course it is!' I exclaimed; 'who doubts it?'

'Well, I don't doubt it,' said he, 'but I want to learn how you yourself know it. The New Testament does not itself even claim to be inspired.'

I was thunderstruck, but I bethought myself of the well-known text in Timothy, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God.'

He laughed outright, and asked me if I seriously believed that this text applied to the books which were not then written, and how I made out that it applied to the New Testament at all, as St Paul was certainly referring to the Old Testament only.

I argued vainly against him for some time, and at last was forced to confess that I supposed that the holy men of old who determined what books were canonical, also knew that they were inspired.

'Bravo! bravo!' he cried. 'So I have you at last! It is on the authority of the Fathers that you really believe in the Bible? And yet you wretched Protestants run them down, and set up your own quibbling interpretations of the Bible against theirs.'

'I don't run them down,' I replied. 'I believe I am quite well up in the whole matter, and I look to the writers of the first four centuries as historical witnesses to the authenticity of the whole of the New Testament Scriptures.'

'How about the Book of Revelation?' he asked.

'Of course,' I replied, 'there are difficulties, and that is one. But at any rate, by the time of the Council of Nice, there was a general agreement about the entire canon.'

'That is to say,' he rejoined, 'the more difficult the question became through the lapse of time, the more easily and certainly it was settled.'

'That's not a fair way of putting it,' I replied. 'The questions were more fully discussed, and all difficulties were finally solved.'

'Humph!' he muttered.

'Well,' I exclaimed triumphantly, 'what have you got to say next?'

'Supposing I grant you this,' said he, 'as a hypothesis; how did the Fathers know that the Bible is inspired, except by being inspired themselves?'

'Why, of course,' I said, 'if St Paul or the Evangelists wrote these books, they were inspired.'

'I don't see that,' he rejoined. 'St Paul and the Evangelists don't say so themselves.'

'Come, Arlington,' I answered, 'you can't help granting this.'

'But I can help it,' he said; 'and I don't grant anything of the kind.'

'Then,' I cried astonished, and believing that he was

only uttering wilful paradoxes, 'how do you yourself know that the New Testament is inspired?'

'Because the Pope says so,' he exclaimed, with a most intolerable look of self-satisfaction, as if he rejoiced in the bewilderment into which he threw me.

'Because the Pope says so!' I echoed. 'Are you mad, Arlington?'

'Not a bit of it,' he cried. 'It's the only way out of the difficulty, I assure you. We must all of us come back to the Pope after all.'

'Never!' I cried with unfeigned indignation.

'Don't be so tremendously tragical, my dear fellow,' he exclaimed, with a coolness that only irritated me more and more.

'Then how dare you remain in the English Church a day longer?' I asked him.

'There are two sides to that question,' he replied. 'Besides, why should I leave the Church of England, just because I happen to believe that the Pope is the best authority for the inspiration of the Bible? I consider myself as being really in spiritual communion with the Pope, though not in visible communion.'

'Pardon me,' I said, 'for saying so; but I must say that you are paltering with your conscience, Arlington.'

'Ah! that's your Protestantism, Seymour,' he replied. 'You mistake my line altogether. It is my vocation to

remain in the English Church for the sake of propagating sound doctrine. I do far more good to the cause of Catholic unity by remaining where I am, than if I were to go over altogether.'

'Tell me, Arlington,' I exclaimed seizing him fiercely by the arm; 'are you a Jesuit?'

'Do you think I should own it if I were?' he rejoined laughing. 'However, for your satisfaction I will tell you that the other day I did meet a Jesuit priest, and he urged me to come over at once, if I wanted to save my soul.'

'And what did you say?' I asked.

'I told him he did not understand my position,' he replied.

'Neither do I,' I rejoined.

And so the conversation ended. And thus I finally left Oxford, after taking my degree, and entered on my clerical duties without the slightest misgiving as to my duty in remaining a member of the Church of England. I had not the faintest suspicion that I should ever so far change my opinions as to consider myself bound to submit to the authority of the Pope. I was still a thorough Protestant, although unquestionably I no longer shared that fierce, ignorant aversion towards Rome, and everything Roman, which I found dominant among my brother clergymen. The existing absurdities of the

time in the English Church I looked upon as mere excrescences, to be thrown off by that healthier inner vital activity, which I trusted would be developed in the course of time.

I think that it was in talking occasionally to those among whom my duties lay that I first began to realise the actual difficulties of the Church of England theory, as I then held it. I had, as I have said, so far reasoned out my notions of Church government as to adopt what was called the Erastian principle of the relations between Church and State. I regarded the Christian ministry as one of the functions of a national community, just like any lay function, from that of the Sovereign or the Prime Minister, down to that of a beadle or a policeman, the difference between the former and the latter consisting simply in the fact that the clergy were busied about the religious aspects of human life, and the laity about its secular. When I was ordained I took the strongly pronounced sacramentalism of the ordination service as a matter of course. It was a portion of the ceremonial which the law of the land had appointed for the introduction of clergymen to their ministerial duties, and into its details I did not think it my business to enter, my own sole concern being the sincerity with which I intended to live the life of a clergyman, as it appeared to me to be described in the New Testament.

Such views as these were, however, difficult to make intelligible or attractive to the more religiously disposed of the laity of all schools. High Church and Low Church together, they believed in the existence of some special supernatural gift, by which every true minister of the Gospel of Christ was called by God to the exercise of his spiritual functions. The Evangelicals, like the Dissenters, held this to be a peculiar inward influence of the Spirit, which in many cases altogether superseded the necessity of any ecclesiastical regulations. The High Church school, without denying the necessity of the inward call, insisted upon the absolute need of ordination at the hands of a bishop, who derived his claim to ordain by direct lineal descent from the Apostles. Now, as I entirely disbelieved in the existence of any internal supernatural impulse to the ministry, distinct in kind from the general influences of Divine grace upon the human soul, I was naturally thrown back upon the dogma of the Apostolical Succession, as my warrant for preaching and teaching and administering the sacraments. I should at all times have thought it a gross impertinence to set up myself as a divinely appointed guide of souls, through some personal inspiration whose existence it was impossible to prove. The theory of the Apostolical Succession, through the hands of the episcopate, supplied, on the contrary, a definite, tangible, and intelligible basis for

the claims of the Anglican clergy. It was simply a question of lineage, just like any other question of hereditary right and hereditary duties. And thus, once more, and from a fresh point of view, I was led to contemplate the existence of the Christian Church as a divinely organised community, founded originally by Jesus Christ for the carrying on his teaching through all ages, and for the administration of the Sacraments which he had himself ordained. The Evangelical idea of the Church as a mere combination of individual pious men and women, who constituted the Church, as it were, accidentally, and solely by virtue of their own personal piety, gradually appeared to me to be flagrantly opposed to the New Testament teaching, while the Erastian theory seemed more and more inadequate to sustain me in those claims to fulfil the functions of a preacher and an administrator of those Sacraments which I was beginning to regard as the special channels of Divine grace.

It was, at the same time, by the New Testament method of speaking of baptism that I was first powerfully and practically impressed. It was through the study of those passages which are urged in Dr Pusey's Tract on baptism, that the first real change was effected in my mind of a Romeward tendency. In those days, I held, as almost every one else did, that each phrase of the New Testament was to be taken as literally true as was pos-

sible, consistently with an admission of the equal claims of every other phrase. I thought nothing of the chronological relationships between its various portions, and of the essentially figurative system of expression which its writers adopted, in common with all men in every age, who speak with practical aims, and above all in the case of Oriental writers. Like so many others, therefore, both young and old, and of all schools, it was very easy to puzzle me with texts, especially as I had acquired a very considerable knowledge of the New Testament, and was always anxious to adopt what I thought its plain teaching without fear of consequences. Of course, I held the old theory of verbal inspiration, and at the same time was inexpressibly disgusted with sayings like that of Luther, when he derided the Epistle of St James as an epistle of straw. I think, in fact, that this famous saying of Luther's contributed not a little to lessen my fears of Rome by increasing my aversion to the Protestant system, whose great leader could be guilty of what I thought so outrageous an offence against the Word of God.

Be this as it may, it was through this famous Tract that I was first forcibly struck with the position which baptism held in the Apostolical teaching, and thus my purely intellectual conception of the organic unity and action of the Christian Church was transformed from a

mere theory, held by a school from which I utterly dissented, into a possibly true and urgent reality. I held, of course, the recognised Anglican idea as to the unlawfulness and invalidity of lay baptism, and was not even aware that lay baptism is regarded as valid by the Roman Church. I only saw undeniably, what I had often heard asserted by the Tractarian school at Oxford, that baptism is unquestionably regarded in the Apostolic writings, if taken literally, as in some mysterious way the instrument through which original and actual sin is forgiven by God through the merits of Jesus Christ. Why I had remained so long unimpressed by the texts which now appeared unanswerable, I cannot say. It was probably through the necessity of harmonising my beliefs, and of renewed reading of the Bible, entailed by my clerical duties, that I now came to give profound attention to statements which I had formerly passed over as unimportant. It was also the gradual operation of the same causes that was slowly undermining my original belief in the perfection of the English Church as a purely Protestant institution. At any rate, I came to see that, according to the literal rendering of the Epistles, baptism must be made to fit into the whole Christian scheme of salvation in a manner which formerly had seemed to me as simply absurd. And if this was true concerning baptism, it was clearly necessary that I must adopt some sort of definite belief

concerning the Church itself, as the divinely appointed organ for the administration of that sacrament, while membership of the organised Church must be, equally clearly, a matter of the utmost possible moment to the soul. Episcopal ordination, and the government of the Church in general, thus began to assume in my eyes an importance as vast as it was new to me. I did not, indeed, understand the essentially Roman conception of the Church, which regards it as the spiritual habitation of Christ, and the channel through which His graces flow forth in a thousand different forms. It was simply to me a divinely ordained institution, whose organic forms it was not lawful for man to modify, and authorised to administer two sacraments, each conveying a specially defined grace to the willing mind.

Some time afterwards, a profound impression was made upon my mind by an argument put forth by Dr Newman, though I cannot at present recall the book or tract in which he urged it. It was to the effect that it is quite inconceivable to imagine that the theology and discipline of the fourth century could by any possibility have developed itself into modern Protestantism. It is an undeniable historical fact, that at the Nicene period, or thereabouts, a perfectly intelligible and complete system of faith and practice was recognised by the Christian Fathers as of Apostolic origin. Supposing,

then, that any one of those Fathers, Athanasius, or Augustine, or Ambrose, or Basil, or Cyprian, or Chrysostom, were now to find himself alive again upon earth, would he find himself at home in the Church of England as it is? or would he not rather find himself thus cast into the energetic life of a religion which was practically alien to the Christianity which he himself had known and believed? Or could the devotional and doctrinal life which has been created and fostered by the Thirty-nine Articles and the union of Church and State, be called, by any possible stretch of language, the same as that which was recognised as universally existing at the Nicene Council, held A.D. 325? No candid man could possibly hold such an opinion, except by resolutely shutting his eyes to facts, and believing just what he wished to believe.

Here, then, was this momentous problem for the Christianity of the nineteenth century to solve. If Anglicanism, even in its High Church forms, could by no possibility be the natural development of Nicene Christianity, can Anglicanism be in harmony with the doctrines of Christ and His Apostles? The question, of course, presupposes that Nicene Christianity was a legitimate development of Apostolic Christianity; and thus the problem presented no difficulty to the Evangelical school, who treated the Fathers with open scorn. But

with myself this scorn was no longer possible. Granting the divinely appointed organic institution of the Church, it was impossible to imagine that Christ's promise that He would be with His Church for ever had come to nought. A recognition of baptism as the sacrament appointed 'for the remission of sins,' was logically incompatible with the belief that in less than three hundred years the promise of Christ to His Church had failed. When Christianity emerges into the light of history, it is not the Protestantism of England, or of Scotland, or of Germany, or of Geneva. After the cessation of the writings of the Apostles, there is a mighty gap, faintly illustrated, in its records; and when those records become sufficiently full to enable us to form any definite idea as to what was its real nature, it is plain that whatever else it was, it was not the faith and the practice which the Church of England has ever presented to our study. Now, after the lapse of thirty years, I still think these facts absolutely undeniable. When I first began to realise them, a shudder ran through me, as the mighty spectre of Rome reared itself in the dim distance of my imagination, and beckoned me to come near.

Thus reflecting, it was natural that I should be impressed by a publication of Dr Newman's, which at the time called upon him the most angry censures from those

who dissented from his views. This was the 85th Number of the 'Tracts for the Times,' in which he took the extremely bold step of arguing that a person who refuses to believe what he called the doctrines of the Church, on the ground that they are not explicitly taught in Scripture, is not justified in believing what are termed the leading doctrines of Christianity, for the plain reason that they also are not more explicitly taught than are the distinctively Church doctrines. Dr Newman himself apologised for the line of argument which he was adopting, and justified it, whether satisfactorily or not I am not prepared to say. He called it 'a kill or cure remedy,' as holding that it would either make men unbelievers or convert them to his own opinions; and, considering the alternative, it is not to be wondered at that many people denounced him as an unprincipled partisan, who cared nothing for men's eternal interests, unless he could bring them over to his own side in controversy.

The force of the argument entirely depended upon a recognition of that theory concerning the New Testament, which in those days was almost universal in the Church of England. It was then held that the books of the New Testament were specially designed by God to constitute a complete body of theology and discipline, inspired in every word, and requiring no help for their interpretation,

except the enlightened mind of the inquirer. They were supposed to be essentially a text-book of doctrines, their narrative and epistolary forms being simply accidental circumstances in the history of their formation. To minds possessed with this idea it was obviously a matter of terrible moment to be reminded that if the New Testament is not very clear on the Real Presence, Baptismal Regeneration, Absolution and Penance, and Episcopal Succession, and the paramount authority and organic unity of the Church, it is equally indistinct on Original Sin, on the Trinity, on Justification by Faith alone, on the Inspiration of the Bible, on the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, on the keeping of the Lord's day, on Infant Baptism, and other doctrines, cherished as of vital importance to salvation. When Dr Newman came and said plainly, 'Believe both sets of doctrines, or disbelieve them both,' people were startled and irritated beyond measure; and considering their theories as to the functions of the Bible, not without very good reason.

On myself the effect was of another kind. I had long come to see that the difficulties of forming any complete body of theology, as we all held theology to be, out of the clear and undeniable statements of the New Testament, was a task of the greatest difficulty; and I was coming round to think that it was a mere superstition to

suppose that the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles supplied a complete and detailed picture of the lives and teaching of Christ, and the Apostles, and of the Christian Church, in its earliest infancy. I was beginning, in fact, to detest the extreme shallowness of that non-historical method of regarding Christianity which was prevalent among the English clergy. The Bible, I saw, still believing it to be absolutely inspired, was only one of a series of records, and must be supplemented by other sources of information, if it is to become a thoroughly intelligible storehouse of truths for the believer. And the effect of this eighty-fifth Tract was to confirm me in this conviction, bringing out more prominently before me the fact that certain definite unwritten traditions must necessarily have accompanied the continued growth of the Christian Church as a living institution. I did not doubt the truth of the Biblical records but I began to doubt their sufficiency; and thus the notion of the necessity of some authoritative interpreter of the whole Christian revelation, as such, began to suggest itself to my mind. The old notion of the New Testament as an elaborate, though difficult, body of theology and discipline, began shortly to fade from my thoughts.

At that time few persons were troubled with the perplexities as to the inspiration and the authenticity of the Bible, which for some years have gone on more and more

agitating the minds of English Churchmen. The value of the necessity of tradition as a testimony to the authorship and the very existence of the various books of the New Testament was but little discussed. People took for granted the old conventional hypotheses which they called 'proofs,' and which were put together for the use of students in the old-fashioned text-books of the day. Of the Biblical criticism of to-day, and of our theorisings as to the authorship of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, the controversialists of thirty or forty years ago knew little or nothing. Such phrases as 'the synoptic gospels' had scarcely been heard in an Oxford Common Room. Men fought as to the importance of tradition for the determination of doctrinal questions, with the avowed view either of upholding or of condemning the dogmatic system which was found developed into vigorous existence at the period of the Nicene Council. Our recent methods of testing the value of the early traditions of the Church, with the aim of ascertaining certain historical facts, without any theological prepossessions, were unknown. And it is the more important that I should recall this old state of opinion, because the currents of theological conflicts are now running in such different channels, and only those who have felt the force of the ancient streams can understand how intense was the interest with which we fought out our conflicts to their

definite issues, on grounds which to-day may seem comparatively unimportant or fictitious.

Historically speaking, indeed, there can be little doubt that the theological controversies, and the accepted modes of settling them, which characterise the present generation, are lineally descended from the controversies of the times about which I am writing. The whole theological mind of the English Church was then profoundly agitated. No man who understood the issues at stake, and cared to know the truth, could possibly remain where he was. He must go forward and enter the Church of Rome, or he must go backward and throw aside dogmatic orthodoxy altogether, or if he remained in the English Church, retaining his Tractarian theology, he must plunge into that openly Romanising movement which is now termed Ritualism. The time was not come for that newer development of the critical and historical school in the Church, which has since entered as a formidable power into the conflicts of the hour, and which professes to treat the various venerable documents of the Christian religion with all the freedom of the elder Tractarians, but without their predisposition in favour of the theology of the Fathers.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE I was thus gradually familiarising my mind with the idea of the organic unity, authority, and sacramental powers of the Church, two causes helped to impel me to a thorough investigation of the one great question between Rome and England, and finally led me to meet it face to face. One of these was a visit to Rome itself; the other was that incessant display of the internal divisions of the English Clergy, which was more and more pressed upon my thoughts in the course of my clerical life. Their personal animosities, the childish nature of many of their debates, and their almost universal unwillingness to meet the Roman arguments with candour, especially as exhibited in the 'clerical meetings' of the period, went on from year to year suggesting the most ominous doubts as to the Scriptural character of a community which seemed equally unconscious of the ludicrous, the inconsistent, and the uncharitable aspects of its own inner life.

It was at one of these meetings in London that I learnt the explosive tendencies of the various elder schools in the Church, especially when brought into contact with

the Liberal School, then just beginning to enter more vigorously into the polemics of the time. The society which met on this occasion was peculiar, in that it did not consist of a knot of ecclesiastics all agreeing with one another, but included men of all shades of opinion, with some of whom I had become personally well acquainted. They met, on the day in question, at the house of the Rev. Leonard Audley, the incumbent of a London church, who was more than suspected of having lately adopted views of a most decided liberal quality, and who had thereby roused the indignation of some of his more orthodox associates to a fierceness which would no longer brook control. In fact, as he told me afterwards, he had been for some time expecting that so many unpleasant things would be said on the present occasion, that for the future he would be practically banished from the meetings of the society. When the business of the day was about to begin, however, he was occupied with a parishioner, and was obliged to send in a message, begging that they would proceed to work, and he would join them as soon as possible.

'It would hardly be civil to begin without our host,' immediately observed the Rev. Theodosius Conway, a stately-looking gentleman, admirably neat in his black apparel, but with none of the peculiar clerical look which is now so common. With Conway, the clerical profes-

sion was simply a profession; the oldest, he was wont to say, of the three learned professions. 'Dogma,' I had heard him remark, 'is not my vocation. I leave that to those who devote themselves to the subject by preference. In our profession there are the same distinctions as in the other two learned professions. As at the bar there are common law barristers, and chancery barristers, and special pleaders, while in the medical profession there are physicians, and surgeons, and general practitioners; so with us there are those who take doctrine for their line, others take the Bible, others Church history, others morals, and so forth. My own line is certainly not dogma,' he went on, when pressed to describe himself more particularly; 'my line, I think I may say, is an important branch of morals; social morals, that is. I devote myself to the cultivation of clerical amenities. I lament our unhappy divisions: and am more disposed to trust to the healing influence of a series of well devised little dinners, or supper-parties on an economical scale, but elegant in their arrangements, than to Acts of Parliament, or even to bishops' charges.'

To a gentleman holding these views, it would clearly have appeared a violation of all laws of good breeding to open the day's proceedings in the absence of the master of the house. His proposition was at once agreed to, though the members were evidently eager to begin, and

many countenances wore the appearance of heavily charged thunder-clouds.

'Audley's in for it,' I heard one young curate remark to another young curate, who had been making no secret of his hope that the day would supply some very good sport. He had lately, he told me without the smallest hesitation, come to London, somewhat against the grain, having been a devotee to the hunting-field before he took orders, with a view to the ultimate possession of a good family living. His rector had brought him to the meeting, which he would insist upon calling 'the Meet,' and he had been enjoined by the rector's daughters to take notes of the proceedings for their private edification.

While the two curates thus discussed, in a corner, the probabilities of 'the day's run,' and wondered what 'sport' Audley would show when hard pressed by the 'hounds,' as they phrased the coming outbreak, his books were being inspected by the vicars of two adjoining parishes, the Rev. Peter Fothergill and the Rev. Yates Wilkins. These gentlemen were known to be bitterly incensed against Audley, and I heard them discussing the quality of the volumes on his shelves with characteristic warmth.

As they thus stood, I had time to examine their outward appearance, and to consider whether it corresponded with the accounts which had been given to me of their

characters. Fothergill's worst enemy could have had little to say against him of which he himself would have been ashamed. Tall, handsome, not ungentlemanly in manner, by no means stupid or deficient in professional learning of a certain narrow kind, he was as merciless in his heart as he was dry and unimaginative in his head. In the Almighty Creator of the universe he saw only a repetition of his own nature. If nobody had ever invented the dogma of supralapsarian predestination, Fothergill would have introduced it into modern Christianity. He could conceive no ideas but those of irresistible power and helpless submission. His one great theme, and on which he was said incessantly to preach, and by which he had gathered together a small but devoted band of listeners from different parts of London, was the irreversible decree of Omnipotence, by which Adam fell, and by which the enormous majority of his own friends, neighbours, and relations were consigned to eternal torments. Audley was, in Fothergill's eyes, one of these doomed ones; and he had more than once been heard to say that the time must soon come when he would smite Audley with the sword of the Spirit, as Samuel 'hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.'

Wilkins was a rigorist of the more unctuous sort, and confessed to a kind of pity for their 'brother Audley.'

'The ways of the Lord,' he remarked to Fothergill, as they stood reading the titles of Audley's books, 'are not as our ways. It may be that he is even now waiting to be gracious to the prodigal, whose heart may be touched by the fervent prayer which it is your turn to offer up at the close of our proceedings to-day.'

'Are these books,' returned Fothergill, with a deepening frown, 'tokens of grace in the soul of man? Popery and Puseyism by the side of Rationalism; the godless poets of the day side by side with romances and with ecclesiastical histories that record nothing of the inward peace of the possessors of indefeasible grace? Hell, be assured, Mr Wilkins, is peopled with the writers of these soul-destroying abominations.'

'My reverend brethren!' here exclaimed a loud voice from the middle of the room, starting alike the jovial curates and the rigorous vicars: 'a word or two before Mr Audley comes in. Our worthy brother, Mr Langford, is anxious to lay a proposition before us on this most painful of subjects."

As he finished speaking, the gentleman to whom he referred uttered a series of inarticulate sounds, expressive of the awkwardness which he felt in addressing his brother ecclesiastics. The Rev. Philip Langford was well known to me as what might be termed a club clergyman, of the sort generated by the theological conflicts

and the social changes of the day. Before this time no such a phenomenon would have been common in the Church of England. He combined a good deal of scepticism in theological things with an extreme disinclination to meddle with any one existing practice or dogma in detail. He belonged to the best University and literary clubs, where he talked on all things, divine and human, with men of all schools, and where he read every new book and periodical, on all sides of all questions. Totally without enthusiasm, and equally without cynicism, he was so utterly without any definite scheme for setting the world to rights, that he was practically the most extreme of religious conservatives. He thought there is something in the intuitional theory of morals and something in the utilitarian theory; something in favour of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and something in the belief that there is no such thing as inspiration at all. Yet every one believed him to be unquestionably sincere and in his own way really earnest. Practically, he was zealous in opposing all change, and equally zealous in defending those who honestly advocated changes nothing less than revolutionary.

As to Audley, I knew that Langford held a decided view. He thought Audley a nuisance, with his inconvenient scruples; but for all that, he would not stand by and see him bullied by his narrow-minded brethren, who

were quite as unpractical and very disagreeable besides. As soon as he could be heard, he stepped into the middle of the room and began his protest.

'Don't you think, gentlemen,' he said, 'that it will be a great mistake to raise any question as to our friend Audley's private opinions? It strikes me that it really is no affair of ours. I can't make out that he ever says anything objectionable in his preaching; and as to his talk with his personal friends, why really if the conversation of any of us were to be put into the newspapers, who would come off blameless?'

A general murmur agitated the room at this very unexpected view of the question.

'The fathers of the primitive church would have argued very differently, Mr Langford,' observed a severe looking rector. 'But we live in a day when discipline is derided, and the Catholic faith counts for nothing.'

'What says the Scripture?' exclaimed another speaker. 'I prefer to abide by the law and by the testimony; and there I read, "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus iii. 10). The Word of God ought to be our guide, and neither the Fathers nor any modern tradition of men.'

A rustle among the Low Churchmen present conveyed their approval of these sentiments.

'I submit,' began Wilkins, 'that the object of these

meetings is the promotion of brotherly love among the ministers of the Word, and that it is our duty to make known to our erring brother in the Lord'——

'Allow me to dissent from that phrase,' here interposed a stern looking curate, who had lately left a theological college in the north, and who was a redhot believer in what he called 'consistency' as the whole duty of man. 'I cannot consent,' he added, in a tone of profound self-approval, 'to speak of a person holding unsound views on the way of salvation as a brother in the Lord.'

'Our erring brother, Mr Duncan,' replied Wilkins, by no means relishing the interruption.

Duncan shook his head solemnly and severely, but said no more.

'I was saying,' pursued Wilkins, 'when our brother, Mr Duncan, interrupted me, that I conceive that we are providentially called to make known to our unhappily erring brother'——

'Would you say, sir, that anybody is ever happily erring?' interrupted another curate, whom I had known when at Oxford as notorious for his conceit, and who was now the bore of his clerical acquaintances through the persistence with which he laid hold of every slip in grammar or reasoning.

'Oh, oh!' exclaimed several of the company; and the

forward curate saw that he had made a mistake, and subsided.

'I was saying,' continued Wilkins, 'that our meeting here to-day is a providential intimation that we should speak seriously and affectionately,—mind, I say, most affectionately,—to our good friend as to the awful condition of those who fall away from the Gospel, which they have been commissioned by the Spirit to deliver.'

'And by the laying on of hands by the bishop,' interposed one of the High Churchmen present.

'"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17);' ejaculated a previous speaker. 'Surely, we must all admit that where a man is called by the Spirit to the ministry of the Word, it is quite needless to inquire whether or not he was ordained by a bishop.'

'There I totally dissent,' cried the High Churchman. 'What says St. Ignatius?—"Do nothing without the bishop."'

'Really, gentlemen,' interrupted Fothergill, 'if we are to land ourselves in a discussion about the Fathers and other such trivialities, we shall do nothing. Allow me to remind you that the decrees of God are irresistible, and that it is not for us to spare the reprobate who is doomed from all eternity by his free choice and will.'

'And do you mean to tell me,' exclaimed Langford, losing all patience, 'that you know whether Audley is or

is not a reprobate? Suppose I were to have the impudence to say that in my opinion you yourself, the Rev. Peter Fothergill, were a reprobate, and would inevitably be damned eternally, what would you say to that?'

'By their fruits ye shall know them,' rejoined Fothergill contemptuously. 'Whom He predestinated, them also He foreknew'——

'Yes! yes!' cried Langford; 'and I take it that the chief fruit of the Spirit is charity.'

'Hear! hear!' cried one of the jovial curates, while his particular friend turned away to hide a laugh.

What more would have been said was never known, for at this moment the discussion was summarily cut short by the entrance of Audley himself, looking worn and weary. Langford instantly called upon him to do his duty as the host of the day, and to read the collects with which the proceedings always opened.

It was the rule to use a selection from the Prayer-Book at the commencement, and to conclude with an extemporaneous performance. This practice was a compromise between the adherents of different schools, the High Churchmen entertaining an aversion towards extempore praying, and the Low Churchmen delighting in it, not merely from a low desire to display their personal gifts of this kind, but as an apparatus for conveying unpleasant truths to the consciences of their less

enlightened brethren. It was obvious that though the rules of etiquette forbade a clergyman to tell a brother ecclesiastic to his face that he was an unconverted character, it was easy enough to introduce sentiments into a prayer about the misery of the unregenerate, as being still in 'the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' with unmistakable applications. Nothing very serious, I was told, had as yet come of this practice at the meetings of the society, beyond the use of a long prayer by one of the highest of High Churchmen, which was much applauded as a devout improvisation, but which he informed the company, much to the disgust of most of them, was taken word for word from a Roman Catholic book of devotion.

To the prayer with which Fothergill was to wind up the day's proceedings, Audley, as one of his friends told me, was looking forward with dismay. None but incumbents were permitted thus to 'lead the devotion' of the members or else, I was assured, Audley would before this time have been probably insulted to his face by some hotheaded youthful zealot. As, however, according to the regulations of the society, it had now come round to Fothergill, in the rotation of incumbents, to offer up this concluding manifesto—for a manifesto it really was—Audley counted upon receiving so direct an affront, that it would be impossible for him to avoid asking whether

the inuendoes which he expected were levelled at himself; and if so, whether it was the wish of the society that he should cease to attend their meetings.

Scarcely conscious of what he was doing, Audley now performed his part with mechanical steadiness of voice and a forced calmness of manner. At a certain phrase, however, in one of the collects, which, by a little perverse ingenuity was capable of application to himself, a terrific sigh, heaved by the chest of more than one of his well-known antagonists, told him that they were preparing for the conflict and eager for the victory.

The prayers being over, the whole assembly seated themselves round a large table, and the discussion of a long passage in one of St Paul's Epistles at once began. As soon as the passage had been read, Langford, who seemed resolved to carry the war into the enemy's quarters, made a proposition that the discussion should be based on the Greek text, and not on the English version. That the proposal would set the meeting by the ears, I had little doubt. I suspected that Audley's special enemies were not strong in Greek, and that the *elève* of the theological college barely knew the letters of the Greek alphabet. A hint or two, besides, about the Greek fathers, would no doubt draw out the High Churchmen's learning in full battery upon the heads of the

others, while a judicious reminder that King James' version is not an inspired work would probably stir up a general *mêlée*, in the midst of which the misdoings of Audley might be forgotten.

'H'm!' snorted Fothergill, when Langford had blandly offered his suggestion; 'I don't quite see the need of varying our usual proceedings.'

'But surely criticism is not criticism at all, unless based on the original,' observed the Rev. Bernard Otway, who held a College Fellowship at Oxford, in conjunction with a very small London rectory. He was reputed to be a formidable scholar of the old-fashioned Oxford type, being thoroughly well-up in Greek as a language for the accurate expression of poetical and philosophical ideas, without much interest in the Greek mind and its wonderful works. He also had a view of his own on the optative mood, which he would much like to produce on the present occasion.

'There is not much to choose between the original and the translation,' rejoined Fothergill; 'both alike are the instrument by which the immutable degrees of irresistible grace are executed, and I have been always perfectly satisfied with the English version.'

'May I ask whether you ever tested it?' inquired Langford, in a tone so bland that the satire was scarcely perceptible.

'I have never thought it necessary,' returned Fothergill severely.

'A very wise determination, I have no doubt,' remarked Otway.

'We never thought it necessary to waste much time about the writings of heathen authors,' remarked a 'literate' from a theological college.

'The pupils of your College always do justice to their training,' rejoined Otway half shutting his eyes, as he always did when saying what he counted a clever thing. The 'literate' being as impervious to a satire as he was ignorant of Plato, took Otway's remark for a compliment.

'Surely, dear friends,' interposed Wilkins, looking as if he thought it high time to offer, what he called, a word in season, 'the only true test of the truth of our admirable translation is supplied by the soul of the believer. When I know, spiritually, that in these words the Spirit is addressing the conscience of me, a poor miserable sinner, and making me a partaker of the glorious liberty of the children of God, it is not necessary that I should trouble myself about the beggarly elements of human language, or the niceties of the tongue invented by idolators two thousand years ago.'

That the innumerable delicacies of the Greek language, including that admirable invention, the optative mood,

should be designated as 'beggarly elements,' was more than the fastidious Oxford scholar could bear.

'Wilkins is a consummate fool,' he whispered to his nearest neighbour, who sat at my side, and was devoted to patristic studies, who replied, in another whisper, 'I quite agree with you.'

'I say, old fellow,' muttered one of the jovial curates to his companion, quite loud enough for me to hear, 'if it comes to the vote, I shall give my voice against the Greek, you know.'

'Say it's Popish,' suggested his friend, 'to cultivate unknown tongues in religion.'

'What is your opinion, Conway?' asked Langford, across the table to Conway, who sat surveying the excited looks and gestures of the meeting with an admirable composure.

'Oh! my dear Langford,' he replied, 'you know this is not at all in my line. Biblical criticism is a department of the profession which I leave to others more competent than myself. I was taught at Oxford that Biblical Greek is not very pure, which quite satisfied me, coming as it did from my own College tutor, a most amiable man, with a wonderful tact for bringing the dons and the undergraduates together at pleasant little breakfast parties.'

'We always understood,' remarked the 'literate,' 'that

Oxford breakfast parties were wanting in spiritual conversation.'

The two jovial curates put their hands before their mouths, but their eyes twinkled with merriment, while an advanced Churchman, suspected of Romanising tendencies, observed that in the early Church the doctrine of the 'Economy' was observed, and that it fully warranted the abstaining from theological discussion at Oxford breakfast parties.

'That sentiment concerning the Economy,' loudly remarked Wilkins, 'is enough alone to condemn the Fathers altogether. Did not Paul make it his boast that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God?'

'Pray, Mr Wilkins,' observed Otway, 'oblige us with your views as to the true meaning of the Greek word which is thus translated "Economy?"'

'Sir!' cried Wilkins, 'the thing is so utterly objectionable and unscriptural, that I do not care to examine into its origin.'

'No doubt you are right,' rejoined Otway; 'at least your decision is a prudent one. Nevertheless we should be much gratified if you would favour us with your views as to the Greek term translated "shunned" in our version?'

'Sir, I have no views on the matter,' retorted Wilkins.

'I hold that to the spiritually enlightened mind it is evident that Paul was right, and that the banishment of edifying conversation from Oxford parties is a proof of the worldly character of our universities.'

And thus the discussion went on. Never, I was told, since the association had been formed, had the spirit of discord reigned so supreme. Audley himself, as he sat quietly listening, gradually grew comparatively composed; and he looked as if, but for the concluding prayer, he would have positively enjoyed the conflict raging around him. At last the moment came. The clock upon the mantel-piece was about to strike half-past four, at which time the meeting was to close.

Langford, who had all along been slyly adding fuel to the debate, and promoting the introduction of topics on which he knew that his clerical brothers would vehemently disagree, had been watching the progress of time. And when the hour for concluding was near at hand, he had judiciously asked Fothergill whether he was not rather kindly disposed towards the Mahometan religion, on account of the rigorous fatalism which it inculcated. Upon this Fothergill had opened the whole battery of his eloquence, repudiating the insinuation with vehemence. But the more he repudiated it, the more vigorously were his views assailed by the High Churchmen, and even by the majority of all present. And when

at length the clock struck the half hour, and Audley, as host, called upon Fothergill to offer up the concluding devotions, that energetic supralapsarian was boiling over with zeal for his favourite dogma, and with indignation against every one who had been controverting it.

In this comfortable state of mind, he knelt down at the table around which we had been sitting, while the rest of the company knelt at chairs all over the room, vainly seeking, if one could judge by their restless movements, to quiet their excited thoughts. I forgot Audley and his iniquities in my wonder as to the kind of prayer which might be looked for under circumstances of so much agitation. A few sentences—if Fothergill's outpourings could be described as coherent pieces of grammatical construction—must have set all minds at rest. Never was Whately's definition of extempore prayers as 'oblique sermons' more forcibly illustrated. Fothergill prayed, not at Audley, but at everybody in general who doubted the doctrine of supralapsarianism. To deny supralapsarianism was to deny the gospel itself. It was the whole counsel of God. And by an audacious application of what had just passed, Fothergill implied that it was only because clergymen 'shunned' to declare that whole counsel that they failed to teach supralapsarianism in all its purity.

This was too much for some of his audience, and one

of the party rose quickly from his knees and sat down, as a marked protest against the monstrosity of Fothergill's words. When it was all over it was evident, from the faces of nearly every one present, that their annoyance was extreme.

'This comes of the modern heresy of extempore prayer,' observed an ultra-patristic rector to the Oxford Greek scholar.

'If we are to have extempore prayers for the future,' replied the other, 'I shall propose that they shall be in Latin, which will silence this ranting Calvinist pretty effectually, I suspect.'

This he said as we all found our way to Mr Audley's drawing-room, marshalled by Audley himself, evidently radiant with good spirits. The rest of the day passed off in tolerable peace.

CHAPTER XI.

MEETINGS such as this, however, though nothing immediately came of them, necessarily served to quicken my sense of the contrast between the religion of the patristic period and that of the English Church, and to bring out the endless divisions of her clergy into the strongest light. Is it possible, I was beginning to ask myself, that this heterogeneous institution can really correspond to that one Church which is often spoken of with honour by Christ Himself in the Gospels, and by the Apostles in their Epistles? This English Church is surely the abode of discord and helplessness, and not the home of Christian love and truth.

Thus prepared to see all that belonged to Rome in a new and favourable light, after I had been about eight years in orders, I made a long continental journey, ending at Rome. I frequented many of the Roman Catholic services, but I could make little of them. The whole idea of Divine worship which they embodied, whether at mass or in any other function, was so unlike the Church of England idea of united prayer, that everything seemed involved in an inextricable confusion, based upon a

ritual so elaborate as to be entirely incomprehensible to a stranger. There was nothing like our English custom, which requires all the worshippers to unite in one outspoken form of devotion, in which everything is easy to follow. Here, on the contrary, in these Roman services, there seemed no unity of word or posture; and the music, in which I had expected to find some guide to the progress of the functions, only made the confusion more bewildering than ever. At the same time, the services unquestionably interested me vividly. They had a sort of look of reality about them, and the demeanour of the congregation, though sometimes heedless and indevout, and generally marked by a kind of dry, business-like speed, at other times struck me as indicating an unquestionable personal absorption in the work in which the people were engaged.

With the internal arrangements and decoration of the churches themselves I became slowly more and more familiar; and their contrast with the frigid nakedness of the characteristic Anglican churches of the time grew more and more striking. The taste they often displayed was abominable, and the music at times was indescribably bad. I remember being present on one occasion at a high mass at a large church in Northern Italy, where the organ-playing at one of the most solemn parts of the service was so ludicrous a reproduction of the

popular operatic music of the day, that I could with difficulty restrain myself from rushing out of the building, under an acute sense of the combined irreverence and laughableness of the whole performance. Yet, in my then condition of disenchantment with the English Church services, the Roman services, as such, seemed to be the work of men who all agreed in what they were doing, and who all meant the same thing even when their demeanour was shameless in its carelessness.

But it was in Rome itself that I first felt as if I was surrounded by the sacred and living presence of a mighty power ordained by God for the ruling of the nations. I felt it but slightly, indeed, for it was chilled and warped by most unfavourable circumstances. I was in St Peter's on Palm Sunday, in the midst of the jostling, wandering, and chattering mob that throngs the vast building on great festivals. I could scarcely follow the mass as it proceeded, and I was bewildered, annoyed, and disgusted. I could just tell that the function had reached the point at which the Gospel is sung, but I knew nothing of the manner in which, in Holy Week, it is sung by different voices to the appropriate Gregorian chant, mingled with outbursts of pure vocal harmony of a rare dramatic force and truth. At first, the hum of voices around me was so loud that I could distinguish nothing; but soon all was hushed around me, and

suddenly the piercing tenor and chorus were still, and the words of Jesus himself rolled along the aisles, given out by a grave, full-sounding bass, at which the whole giddy crowd seemed filled with awe: '*Quid molesti estis huic mulieri? Opus enim bonum operata est in me.*' I never felt a musical utterance as I felt those notes, and the whole of the remainder of the words which the Evangelist records as having been spoken by Christ in the first scenes of his agony.

With the general splendour of the ceremonial within St Peter's, both on Palm Sunday and on Easter Day, I was not affected. It was too much of a mere show; and the fact that the vast number of spectators thus regarded it, was painfully prominent to my Protestant eyes, willing as I was to regard the whole as an act of profound worship. The sight of the aged Pope (it was in the Pontificate of Gregory XVI.) in his chair, borne aloft upon men's shoulders, and dispensing his blessings all around, typified, indeed, the unity of the Papal organisation, and strangely contrasted with everything that the English Church could present as representing the order and power of the Church of Christ. But there was nothing religious in the aspect of the surging, staring, gossipping throng that paid the Pope their accustomed homage; while my æsthetic sensibilities were shocked with the endless stream of huge, white mitres, borne by the procession of bishops,

resembling nothing so much as the traditional fool's cap of the idle schoolboy.

It was different outside St Peter's on Easter Day, when the Pope stood on the balcony in the front of the church, and gave his blessing to the innumerable multitude that stood and knelt in the vast piazza before him. The incongruities of Bernini's long-drawn colonnades, and the architectural anomalies of the enormous façade of the Basilica itself were forgotten, and all the eye cared to note was that vast assemblage acknowledging the supremacy and Divine powers of the feeble old man who held up his hand to bless them. Here was indeed a token of some mighty spiritual power, permanent among all changes of kings and empires, outlasting all stages of civilisation, and ruling men's minds by the sheer force of their belief in the unseen. Then, for the first time, I began to realise the power of Rome, and the intensity of the strength that she wields, by virtue of her unity, and the concentration of her power in the hands of one man, claiming to be the vicegerent of God upon earth. It is true that all this was but an appeal to the imagination, but it was an appeal to the imagination in its most intellectual activity; and filled as my memory was with the diversities and hesitations of Anglican Christianity, I was proportionately impressed with the mighty power I thus saw embodied before me. At last I could recognise

Rome as a living fact. In summing up the elements upon which the great religious controversy concerning Christianity must be determined, Rome entered as a prodigious phenomenon that must be accounted for. She could not be put aside with the vulgar Protestant contempt which scorns her as the Apocalyptic Babylon or the Scarlet Lady, or with the uninformed self-complacency of the Anglican school which looked down upon her as a decaying relic of mediæval superstition. In the middle of the nineteenth century, which regards itself as the most enlightened of ages, Rome still ruled the minds of populations whose millions no secular power could hope to rival.

And yet in very many respects the Rome of to-day, with the exception of the columns of Trajan and Antonine, did not impress me with any sense of the vivid vitality of her ecclesiastical system. Indeed, it was rather the co-existence of this enormous power with the spiritual and intellectual effeteness of all that is to be witnessed in Rome, which tended to convince me of the reality of her inner unity, and the irresistibleness of her sway. I thought Rome the most sad and dreary of great cities, the very tomb of bygone ages, enshrining the still eloquent relics of an extinct race, once the worthy ruler of the world, pagans as they were. For its more modern glories, too, Rome was dependent upon the creations of

the *renaissance* period, when the religious life of the Church, such as it was, was kept in check by the energetic and fruitful culture of a most heathenish type of ecclesiastics and scholars. On the Trajan and Antonine columns alone stood the statues of the great Apostles, typifying the triumph of Christianity over its pagan persecutors; but all else was stamped with the signs of decay. The bad taste of three centuries of Jesuitical and other ecclesiastical predominance had swept away nearly all remains of the vigorous middle ages, when the Church was indeed a power among men; and the Rome of to-day was only too manifestly peopled with an effete generation, unable to cope with the science, the freedom, and the philosophy of the present, and to comprehend the greatness either of the old Republican, Imperial, or Mediæval Romans. The very remains of the leagues of aqueducts, and the desolation of the Campagna, affected me as the memorials of an historical life that had now sunk into a second childhood. And thus it was that during the whole of the after-years that I remained a loyal subject of the Papacy, I never once desired to see Rome again, so mournful was the tale it had told me of the helplessness and ignorance of the ecclesiastical life which still lingered amidst the scenes of its departed greatness. All that I carried away with me tending to lead me to submit to the claims of Rome,

was an increased sense of its unity, and of the contrast between its power, such as it was, and the hesitations, the dissensions, and the feebleness of the Anglican Church, in which I was again about to minister.

I knew nothing, of course, of that opinion with regard to the inner life of ecclesiastical Rome which in after-years I heard from the lips of many English Roman Catholic bishops and priests. I did not know that to such men, brought up in the midst of the more healthy, straightforward, and truth-telling English, German, Irish, and even French Catholicism, an introduction to the secrets of Roman sacerdotal and Pontifical government is often nothing less than a severe trial to their faith. To the laity, indeed, such confessions were only occasionally made in the confidence of private friendship, for it is the fatal error of the Roman system that its one aim is to keep all unpleasant truths from the knowledge of laymen. But that ecclesiastical Rome is in reality the home of intrigue, and that its recognised habits of life are repellent to our healthier northern Catholicism, is a fact which none will deny whose love of truth is stronger than their dread of bringing discredit on the creed they believe, or at least which they maintain.

And thus it came to pass, when I was once more in England, and engaged in clerical work, that I could no longer avoid facing the tremendous final question, 'Is,

or is not, the English Church a living branch of the Church set up by Jesus Christ?' Once granting the reality of the Christian revelation, can it be believed that God has left us without any clear, intelligible, and certain means for ascertaining the real doctrines taught in that revelation? This, I saw, was the one sole problem before me. All else was nothing. I did not care, except as a mere matter of æsthetics, for the splendour and elaboration of the Roman ceremonial. Viewed externally, the Roman Church by no means presented to me that wonderfully august and Divine aspect which it wears to many minds.

As for that element in her system which is so attractive to certain devout Protestants, especially those who are influenced by the Tractarian theology—I mean her enforcement of confession, and her granting of absolution by the mouth of the priest—to myself it was absolutely repellent. I never felt the faintest desire for such absolution, and any such desire always appeared to me to be the result of a morbid imagination, and of that inability to believe in any real intercourse between the soul and God, which is not sustained by some visible mediator. Of course, if it were proved that such confession and absolution had been enjoined by God, as a matter of fact, to be put in practice whenever opportunity offered, the duty became absolute. The essential condition of for-

giveness, namely sincere penitence, would remain the same, whether or not it had pleased God to enjoin the addition of a certain form whenever circumstances allowed. And in the event of my determining on joining the Roman Communion, this element in her system must necessarily be adopted with all the rest. I was aware that Rome taught the necessity of true repentance in order to make the 'Sacrament of Penance' of any avail; and also that she held that forgiveness was granted to true repentance alone, when it was impossible to have recourse to a priest for his absolution. But the act of confession was never anything but an unpleasant necessity. From the first to the last it resembled nothing so much as a small surgical operation; and the only comfort I derived from it was the sense of relief from a disagreeable duty, each time that the work came to an end.

So again, with that consciousness of belonging to a gigantic spiritual organisation, which defied the powers of the world, which numbered its adherents in all ages and countries, and whose creed and worship was identical wherever the name of Rome was known; all this moved me only so far as it seemed a sign of the indwelling presence of God, directing the chief authority of the Church into all truth. This is what I should expect to see as the practical effect of the infallibility of Rome,

I argued to myself, on the supposition that she is infallible; just as the diversities of Protestant opinion are the natural effects of the absence of any infallible guide to the meaning of the Bible. One problem was thus alone before me; whether or not the perpetual existence of an infallible guide was involved in the elementary idea of a doctrinal revelation, whose original documents were obscure, and unable to bring the most willing minds to an absolute identity of belief.

At last I came to the conclusion that the existence of an infallible and intelligible teacher is thus necessarily involved in the nature of a revelation, for that otherwise it would be really no real revelation at all. And such being my conclusion, there seemed no alternative but to betake myself to Rome as the divinely appointed guide. The High Anglican theory concerning General or Œcumenical Councils appeared to me an unreal subterfuge. To a soul struggling in all the tempests of doubt, and crying aloud to God for light, what was the practical value of the decrees of assemblages of bishops, who had met together fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago? When a gallant ship is driving headlong before the storm upon a black and rock-bound shore, what avail is it to gaze at the glimmering of lighthouses far away in the misty distance? Those lights may have saved many another labouring bark in other days, but in the present

agony they are as valueless as if they were quenched in darkness. To us of to-day Rome is the only refuge, for she alone is a living guide, and claims to be the only living guide. Protestantism everywhere disowns infallibility; Greece has for centuries and centuries ceased to appeal to any living light; while Rome still stands forth, claiming to be the home of the still living Redeemer, taught by Him and guided into all truth. I could see no alternative; I could find no other authority for the doctrines which, as a clergyman, it was my office to preach; every other foundation seemed a fatal quicksand, into which my feet sank deeper and deeper as I moved along. And thus I broke through every barrier that held me back, and submitted to the terrible decree.

CHAPTER XII.

THE moment that I had made up my mind I felt a sense of unquestionable relief. The die was cast, and what would be the consequences I could not tell; but at least the tormenting agitations of doubt were over, and I was satisfied that I had found the key to the great mystery of life. The sense of bewilderment was past, and I looked forward to the enjoyment of all that untroubled devotion, both in private and in the public offices of the Church, which I expected to be the necessary result of my entrance into the one united fold of Jesus Christ.

I was received into the Roman Church at St Augustine's College, a large institution modelled after the usual English Roman Catholic plan, in which lay and church students are brought up together, and the weakness and the strength of English Roman Catholicism are conspicuously manifest. I made my confession to a distinguished prelate, and was by him conditionally baptised and formally admitted into the Church. As I look back to this momentous turning point in my life, it seems difficult to realise the extreme ease with which the whole

arrangements were completed. I was of course welcomed with open arms, for just at this time it was beginning to be surmised that all the anticipations about the Romeward influences of the Oxford movement would turn out fallacious, and that little or nothing would come of it in the way of extensive conversions. Accordingly, I was regarded as the herald of mighty things to come, and my actual reception was little more than a formality. It was assumed that I thoroughly understood the whole nature of the question between Rome and her opponents; as, indeed, except on one momentous point, I certainly did understand it. My confession—a general confession, that is, of all the sins of the past life—was of the briefest kind. Hardly a single question was asked me; and it was as little disagreeable as any such intercourse between one man and another can possibly be. As far as I remember, it did not last more than a quarter of an hour. The ceremonial of baptism and of admission was equally simple and straightforward, according to the Roman fashion. Naturally, I was somewhat excited, and was profoundly touched by the comparative beauty and expressiveness of the Catholic ceremonial of all kinds, with which I became immediately familiar. What is the practice with other bishops and priests in receiving converts I am quite unable to say; but I believe it varies largely, from the easy fashion with which I was welcomed

down to a real carefulness and rigour. I never felt any great curiosity on the subject, as my attention was soon absorbed in matters of what appeared to me far more practical interest.

The world in which I found myself was an absolutely new world. Seeing, as I then did, all things under a *couleur de rose*, I was not at first as fair a critic of the working of those singular institutions, the English Catholic colleges, as I soon was forced to become. Everything wore that ecclesiastical aspect which is unknown at Oxford and Cambridge, where the clerical idea is subordinated to the academical, and the clerical is nothing but the academical dress. In the Catholic colleges everything is the reverse. You feel at once that you are in a society in which the lay element is absolutely subjugated to the sacerdotal. The teachers of the boys and young men are young ecclesiastics, and the cassock is hardly ever out of sight. The look, both of the boys and of the young ecclesiastics, struck me at once as singular. There was a lack of that freedom, self-reliance, and openness, which is common among Protestant boys and youths. Everything savoured of routine, and there was a general look of roughness which jarred against my notions of academic perfection. What were the radical faults of this and similar colleges, I could not of course discern, as I learnt them

afterwards; but I rapidly discovered that if I had imagined that St Augustine's was the pre-eminent abode of Christian charity, I was egregiously mistaken. Nothing, in fact, but the state of *exaltation* to which I was naturally wound up, prevented me from being very decidedly scandalised at the manner in which its chief authorities discoursed on one another, and on other members of the Roman Communion. For the same reason, indeed, it was that I was not more startled by the open avowal of the theory that the internal personal quarrels of Catholics and religious orders only served to bring out with more logical force the extraordinary restraining power of that unity of doctrine and organisation by which they are distinguished from Protestants.

I had not been two days at St Augustine's when the eminent prelate who had received me unfolded to me the feelings of personal ill-will with which he was regarded by at least two of his episcopal brothers in England, dilating at the same time on the enormities of the Roman Catholic newspaper press. Jealousy, he assured me, was at the root of the evil disposition with which he was regarded. The English Catholic bishops, he told me, were for the most part indisposed to adopt the peculiar ideas on discipline and devotion which are characteristic of Rome itself. They were insular, Galli-

can, half afraid of Protestants, and by no means willing to allow him to bring them to a better mind. He said, in fact, a great deal more than I think myself justified in repeating, although all the parties concerned have now long been dead. Among other sources of ill-will, I learned that the rivalry for the support of the English laity, between the different colleges, was absolutely bitter; that some of the bishops who were at the head of them were only just on speaking terms. Before long I learnt that the hostility between the bishops and the religious orders was sometimes as marked as in the fiercest mediæval ages of ecclesiastical warfare. This same prelate himself, who was the head of the college, I found was the very reverse of universally popular among all his subordinates.

One day I was sitting with one of the 'Professors,' as they called them, though they were nothing more than ordinary college tutors, or private schoolmasters, Dr Maxwell by name. He had become a convert many years ago, long before the Tractarian movement was thought of. But he was a well-educated man, and a gentleman, and he was pointedly civil to me from the beginning.

'I am so glad you are come, Mr Seymour,' he said, after a little trifling talk. 'It's a consolation to me to have a man of cultivation to talk to. I only wish you

were going to stay here. I suppose you could not make any arrangement for taking any part in the teaching?'

I told him it was out of the question.

'But is it so bad?' I added.

He shrugged his shoulders as he replied, 'What can you expect? The teachers are mere lads, church students, who are set to look after a crowd of boys that despise them, and who ought to be learning themselves, when they are pretending to teach others.'

'But is not that a wretched system?' I asked in my simplicity.

'Wretched enough,' he replied. 'But by and by you will understand it better. These colleges of ours are really inventions for keeping up the supply of priests. The money paid by the lay boys goes to keep up the establishment, and to educate the Church boys, and keep them till they are ordained.'

'But are there no well-to-do young men who take orders?' I asked.

'Very few indeed,' he replied. 'It is the rarest thing in the world for a member of one of the old Catholic families to become a priest, and then they generally go to the Jesuits. Most of our priests come from the small shopkeepers, or from a lower class still.'

'You amaze me,' I exclaimed.

'You will be amazed at a good many things, Mr Sey-

mour,' rejoined Maxwell, 'before you've been a Catholic very long.'

'But how do the boys get on with those who are set over them?' I asked. 'Some of these young fellows must be seventeen or eighteen years old.'

'They don't get on at all,' said he, 'in most cases. The lay boys despise the prefects, who, perhaps, are sons of their own fathers' servants.'

'And what are the old Catholic families like?' I asked. 'One hears nothing of them in the world in general, only that there are some historic names among them, that everybody knows.'

'They are as proud as Lucifer,' said Maxwell, 'and as ignorant as they are proud. They snub their chaplains to their faces. I have known a house where the priest was never allowed to drink more than one glass of wine at dinner, and another where he was always let in at the back door when he came on Sundays to say mass.'

'But surely this is a most disgusting state of things,' I exclaimed.

'There's more to be said for it than you imagine, Mr Seymour,' he replied. 'Some of the English priests are perfectly unpresentable in a lady's drawing-room.'

'But Dr Thornycroft is a gentleman surely,' I rejoined, naming the prelate who had received me into the Church.

'Yes, he is,' said Maxwell, 'and a scholar too, and he has many good points about him.'

'He is an honest and straightforward man,' I observed, 'and not the double-faced controversialist that some people think him.'

'He was honest, I believe, by nature,' said Maxwell, 'but he was spoiled by being brought up at Rome.'

With all my zeal as a convert, and my disposition to believe that whatever was pre-eminently Roman must necessarily be admirable, I retained a good deal of my old suspiciousness as to the prevalence of double-dealing in the Eternal City, and this information as to the influence of Rome upon one of her most distinguished sons, was not by any means the incredible calumny which it would have seemed to many newly-received converts. Besides, had I not already heard from Dr Thornycroft himself the most frank avowal of the ill-will existing among his brothers towards himself? At the same time, had it not been for the dazzling effect of the new life in which I found myself, the characters of the religious services, and the strong impression of unity, of faith, and official action which I received in the midst of those tokens of deficiency in Christian charity, I should certainly have experienced a sudden sense of disenchantment of the most painful kind. In the English Church, it was the personal disunions of her clergy and bishops

that had distressed me as much as her disagreements in doctrine had perplexed me. And here at once I was brought face to face with the painful truth that in Rome, as in England, human infirmity was triumphant in the most professedly saintly bosoms.

At St. Augustine's, also, I saw the worship of Mary in full vigour, but not in any idolatrous shape. In those days the outrageous extravagances of Italian Mariolatry had not been yet introduced into England. And it was with no little surprise that I heard that there was still a disinclination in many of the old Catholics, both lay and clerical, to use even the Litany of Loretto either in public or family worship. At that time the term 'old Catholics' was simply used to mean those who were not converts, its recent German adoption being of course not even thought of. In my own convert zeal, of course, I could see nothing objectionable in the famous Litany, especially as I was assured that the veneration paid to Mary was never allowed to trench on the worship of God. Its strange allegorical and Oriental phraseology did not offend me, but rather struck me as somewhat picturesque, especially as it lent itself well to a lively kind of congregational singing, almost in the form of a chant. It is not a little significant of the changes that have taken place in popular Protestant feeling as to borrowing at will from Catholic sources, that the very first melody to

which I ever heard the Litany of Loretto sung, has now become one of the most popular of Anglican, and, I believe, Dissenting hymn tunes, published in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' under the name of 'Innocents.' To this day whenever I hear that tune, the old words run in my head,—*Sancta Maria, Sancta Dei genitrix, Sancta virgo virginum, ora pro nobis.*

One day I was talking on the whole subject of the worship of Mary with an old Oxford man, Southgate by name, who had some time before joined the Roman Church, and who was preparing for the priesthood at St Augustine's. He defended it in its extremest forms, and was for defying Protestant public opinion altogether. Such men were unwelcome to the steady-going, cautious clergy of the old school, who not only dreaded the effect of these extravagances upon the Protestant world, but really disliked and disapproved of the Italianised developments of Catholicism altogether. To such sober and discreet thinkers Southgate's headlong disregard of consequences was intolerable; but he cared nothing for them.

'My dear Seymour,' he said to me, when I told him that I was surprised to find even small differences of opinion where I had expected only the most unbroken unity, 'English Catholicism has been horribly Protestantised through the heresy in which it has managed to

survive. The priests want converting as much as the Anglican parsons. They shrink from the worship of our Lady as if they were absolute heretics.'

Now this term 'our Lady' was to my taste singularly unattractive, if not actually repellent. It seemed to me effeminate, worldly, silly, and derogatory to Christ in his title of 'our Lord.' I never at any time, during the many years I remained in the Roman Communion, could bring myself to like it. However, I said nothing of this to Southgate, but only asked him how he defended the excesses of Mariolatry which were encouraged by those who drew their inspiration direct from Rome itself.

'They are not excesses at all, my dear fellow,' he replied. 'They are the logical results of the very doctrines all orthodox Protestants hold, or think they hold.'

'I don't in the least understand you,' I said astonished.

'But you will before long,' said he, 'now you're a Catholic, and have the gift of Divine faith. Protestants think they have faith, but it's only opinion; at least there are few enough of them who keep their baptismal gift uninjured, even if they're really baptised after all.'

In those days I knew nothing about the extent of the carelessness with which baptism was held by Roman Catholics to be administered in the English Church. I had made no objection to being conditionally rebaptised

myself, as part of the ceremonial of admission into the Church; but I had never considered the question of the real probability of the invalidity of Anglican baptisms. The extremely off-hand manner, however, in which Southgate decided against their general validity, struck me with surprise; and I told him so.

'Well, it's all right with you now,' he rejoined. 'And as I was saying, your faith in the divinity of our Lord will soon lead you, with your old Oxford habits of reasoning, to see that what you call Mariolatry is necessarily involved in that faith.'

I suppose I looked a good deal perplexed, for he went on:

'Come now, you have of course got rid of the Protestant hatred of the term θεοτόκος, applied to our Lady.'

'Well, I suppose so,' I said.

'Yet you know that half the High Churchmen in England dislike the word, though the Council of Chalcedon teaches it, and they pretend to believe what all the Œcumenical Councils teach.'

'Still,' I argued, 'you can hardly profess that the word θεοτόκος justifies all those monstrous prayers to Mary to command her Son, and so forth.'

'But I do profess it,' he replied. 'You cannot possibly deny it.'

'How can a creature command God?' I asked.

'Do you believe that according to the Council of Chalcedon, Mary brought forth God.'

'Jesus was the Son of God,' I answered; 'and I worship Him as God.'

'So all the heretics said and say,' he rejoined. 'You must answer me this, Do you believe that Mary brought forth God?'

'Yes, certainly,' I said, though with hesitation; 'I suppose it must have been so.'

'And also He obeyed her when she commanded Him?' he continued.

'Unquestionably,' I said.

'Then a creature commanded God when He was in the flesh on earth,' he went on, 'and where is the difficulty in believing the same now? She is His mother still, as much as she was eighteen hundred years ago. As He obeyed her then on earth, so He obeys now in heaven.'

I said no more, being totally unable to answer him, except that after a little thought I asked him how the older generation of Catholics liked these views.

'They can't bear them,' he said; 'but they will soon come round when they know better. A glorious day is coming for the Church in England, depend upon it. And St Augustine's will be one of the first to help in

the good work. There goes the "*Angelus*,"' he added, as the bell sounded through the corridors. 'Add a Hail Mary, Seymour,' he said, as we knelt down for the prescribed devotion, 'for the conversion of England.'

CHAPTER XIII.

AT the same time it was clear to me at once that there is no truth in the common Protestant notion that the Roman system is an elaborate imposture. Some of the persons with whom I became acquainted at St Augustine's were men of high character and self-denying aims. And in the inmates of the college generally there were the most unquestionable tokens of sincerity. They believed undoubtedly in the Divine authority of the Roman Church, and looked upon the faith with which they believed her teaching as the direct gift of God to the soul. They were as sincere in their religious services as the most honest of Protestants. In the midst of the most striking exhibitions of human infirmity, no one could help seeing that they were more or less religious, and obeyed the rules of the Church with conscientious regularity.

The peculiar differences between the clergy and those of the English Church did not strike me at once as they struck me afterwards, except that I was conscious of an agreeable absence of that grave and artificial mannerism which in those days was common among the more

zealous of the Anglican clergy. They were more business-like in their ways of conducting devotions of all kinds, and of the irreverence of talk which is by no means unknown in the midst of sacred functions among the Roman priesthood, I saw nothing at St Augustine's. How far it really existed I have no means of knowing. I have seen quite enough of it elsewhere.

The impression of the religious functions, from the mass downwards, upon my imagination was powerful and lasting. The bewildering effect of the elaborate details of the Catholic worship which I had felt when abroad passed off at once. Seeing the system from within, I learnt directly the fundamental difference between the Roman and the Anglican idea of united worship. There is no doubt that the Roman idea was to a great extent the result of the sacrificial conception of the Lord's Supper, in which all Roman public devotion culminates; but the idea itself is capable of extension far beyond the limits of the service of the mass itself; and is, to my judgment, in some respects more philosophical and practical than the ordinary Anglican idea of common prayer. As soon as I understood it, it commended itself to me, and though it is now so many years since I left the Roman Communion, my belief on the subject is still unchanged.

The Roman theory of common worship admits the

utmost liberty of individual devotion, provided the worshippers are agreed as to the general substantial identity of the prayers they offer. In the act of a material sacrifice, offered by the hands of a priest, this separation between his physical action, with the appropriate words which accompany it, from the prayers with which the attendant worshippers unite their intentions with his intentions is necessary, from the nature of the act. The priest offers the victim, whether in the Jewish or the Pagan sacrifice or the Roman Catholic mass, for himself and for the sins of the people. As a religious service, the offering is complete, even if not a single attendant worshipper is present. God is held to be propitiated by that which is presented to Him by sacerdotal hands, and His blessing to be given in return.

Hence follows the further deduction, that the actual prayers offered by any worshippers who may be present, and who may mentally associate themselves with the intention of the priest in his offering, will have a personal character of their own, and will be in some respects independent of the forms of supplication uttered by the priest himself. Hence has come the almost universal practice in Roman Catholic countries, according to which the laity have special prayers of their own, which they are taught to utter at each separate portion of the mass. These devotions, with the ignorant, are of the

simplest kind, and are often nothing more than the recitation of the Rosary—the 'telling one's beads,' as it is popularly called. Hence that startling contrast, to the Protestant eye, which a Catholic congregation assisting at mass presents to the typical Church of England service. All seems confusion. The priest is engaged in one work; his assistants seem busied with something else. The coming and going, the gesticulations, the genuflections, the throwing up of incense, the alternations between silence and music, the changing of vestments, and the moving of books, all seems a ridiculous mummery, enacted before a stupid congregation, who look on and take no part in the pantomime, and regard these idolatrous formalities of the priests as a substitute for the inner intercourse of their own souls with that God who must be worshipped, if worshipped at all, in spirit and in truth.

And undoubtedly, in the case of ignorant or irreligious congregations, the Roman Catholic mass is as senseless a piece of formalism as the most ultra-Protestant critic can imagine it. But the same is to be said of all Anglican and Protestant dissenting congregations. That the idea on which the Roman system rests does in itself tend to substitute formalism for a spiritual worship will be maintained, I think, by no one who has ever entered into it. The question, it should be remembered, has nothing to

do with the doctrinal belief in Transubstantiation, or in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. For, as a matter of fact, the same system is carried out in the Roman Church in the case of many of its other services. An amount of individual liberty is not merely tolerated, it is encouraged, which is unknown among Protestants, but which, as I understand human nature, is essential, or at least most important, to the offering of a purely spiritual worship by a miscellaneous congregation, containing the educated and the ignorant, the old and the young, the intelligent and the dull. My experience of the Roman system has taught me that it is most desirable that the various members of a congregation should be allowed to vary their own personal prayers when at church, to such an extent as may be required by their individual capacities. The elaborate forms of a highly-refined liturgy are not adapted to the capacities of every one, whatever his age or education. If we are all of us to pray, not only with the heart, but with the understanding also, we must allow all men to express their pious desires in their own words, otherwise our English services will remain as they are, so little attractive to the vast multitude of the poor.

To the practical adoption of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which it is supposed must cause so much difficulty to the Roman neophyte, and its supposed

idolatrous influences, I myself felt no objection. I had no more difficulty in believing it, and in realising what I believed, when once I had satisfied myself that it was taught by a competent teacher, than an ordinary orthodox Protestant experiences in believing and realising the absolute truth of every syllable in the Bible, when he has been taught this belief from his infancy. It was no more an incredible thing that Christ's glorified body should be present, though I saw and touched only the appearance of bread, than to believe that the world was made out of nothing in six days, or that Moses came down from Mount Sinai carrying two tablets of stone on which the finger of God had just inscribed Ten Commandments in the Hebrew language, in one of which it was stated that the world was thus created. There seemed to me nothing more extraordinary in the belief that Omnipotence itself should be present in the sacramental bread and wine, than that It should have been present in the body and blood of Jesus eighteen hundred years ago. If the Jews then struck God, and crucified God in Judea, I could see no reason why a priest, perhaps a very bad man, should not hold God in his hands in England to-day.

As to the idolatrous element in the dogma of Transubstantiation, I could not perceive that it was in any way more present than in the belief that Jesus was God

eighteen centuries ago. Whether Transubstantiation is true or false, it is no more idolatrous than is the belief that God died upon the cross upon Calvary. I always saw clearly that the intention was to worship Jesus Christ present upon earth, after a manner which I could not understand, but which I believed to be the fact on the authority of the Romish Church. Unquestionably the belief in this doctrine does exercise an irresistible effect upon the general tone of the devotions of the Roman Church. Especially it tends to keep up a veneration for the priesthood, as the instruments through which the miracle of Transubstantiation is incessantly wrought by the Divine agency. It generates, too, that sentiment of awe with which devout Catholics, especially women, regard the sacramental vessels, and every substance with which the supposed body and blood of Christ come into contact. All this, to those who reject the dogma, is a superstition, and regarded as being more or less debasing in its nature, according to the views we hold of the demoralising influence of superstitions in general. But from the first, it never occurred to me that in worshipping the Host I was doing anything but worshipping the one true God. The influence of the dogma upon the poor and ignorant, and, above all, in countries like Italy or Spain, where superstitions of all kinds choke the very life itself of the multitude, is very different.

I do not doubt that with them it tends to localise and materialise the conception of God Himself, and tempts them to imagine that God is in the Host and only there.

At St Augustine's again, I soon became acquainted with the fierceness of the æsthetic battle which was then raging between the Mediævalists and the Anti-Mediævalists in the Roman Communion. It was one of those controversies characteristic of the Roman Church, which, while they leave untouched all matters of doctrine on which the Church, *i.e.*, Rome, has spoken, are waged with a depth of angry feeling which quite equals any similar conflicts among Protestants, among whom artistic and antiquarian fights are fought out with comparative amiability, unless some doctrinal antagonisms are involved in the issue. It was also a significant fact that the Catholic Mediæval and Anti-Mediæval combatants of the time I am describing were not ranged in order of battle, according to their Ultramontane or their Gallican theological views. Gallicanism and Ultramontanism were then often merged in overpowering æsthetic inclinations, sharpened by those personal friendships or dislikes which I soon found were at the least as efficient moving agents in Rome as in England. *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?* I could not help sometimes asking myself, when I learnt the jealousies and rivalries

of men who claimed the supernatural sacredness of the Roman priesthood.

The Gallicanism of those days, both of the English and Irish Catholics, I ought, perhaps, to explain, was quite a different thing from the Gallicanism of France, when Gallicanism was a living power within the Church of Rome. It is, in fact, because the difference between the Gallicanism of the seventeenth and that of the nineteenth century is so often overlooked by Protestant writers, that the easiness and completeness of the late Ultramontane triumph seems so inexplicable to many observers. And it is only by recalling the real facts of the case that the internal phenomena of English Catholicism, at the time when I myself became a Catholic, can be correctly understood. At that time the genuine Gallicanism of the seventeenth century survived rather as an instinct than as a clearly defined theory, while the political conditions under which the elder theory had flourished were now fundamentally changed.

In its palmiest days, Gallicanism, or, as it is more correctly called, Nationalism, in religion, not only assigned certain definite limits to the power of the Papacy, but it assigned certain prerogatives, less definitely limited, to the royal supremacy in each state, attributing to each power a positive Divine origin. Kings had their rights as well as Popes, according to

this theory, and it is in the perpetual and instinctive struggles between these two views of government that we must look for the source of the fiercest conflicts that have shaken Christianity and the organisation of the Church from the days of Constantine till this very hour. In our own country, where Protestantism is supposed to have been triumphant since the days of the Reformation, these contending principles have been even less fought out than in most of the continental nations. The constitution of the Church of England, including schools of absolutely antagonistic theologians within her limits, and the relationships of Dissenters to the Church and to the State, have preserved these complications up to the present time almost as far as ever from solution. That solution, however, must come at last, and men must adopt one theory or another with something like distinctness. One thing only is certain, the Gallicanism of the seventeenth century in France, and that of England in the early days of High Church Anglicanism, are doomed to rise no more.

This old-fashioned Gallicanism was simply destroyed by the great French revolution. As soon as the French clergy discovered that the secular power was the enemy and not the friend of Catholicism, they discovered also that the sovereign has no right whatsoever within the Church itself. The hostile attitude, not merely of

Ultramontane individual Popes, but of the whole Roman episcopate towards the secular power, is the direct effect of that tremendous political and social convulsion. The idea of the complete separation of Church and State became then a national reality, and was no longer the vision of unimportant Protestant sectaries. Free from all pecuniary social and political obligations to the State, the Papacy then began to assert its absolute uncontrolled independence, that is to say, according to its more consistent thinkers, its absolute supremacy. Once more the vision of the Bonifaces, the Hildebrands, and the Innocents, gave promise of being realised; and the Papacy at length was free to work out its ends unhampered by the unmanageable independent claims of local hierarchies and local priesthoods.

The Gallicanism of the French and the Irish priesthoods of this present century was a far less powerful antagonist to advancing Ultramontanism than had been the Royal and Imperial Catholicism of the past. It had become the theory of learned theologians, or the instinct of helpless bishops and priests. Practically, over such opponents Rome was already absolute. They might hold resolutely that each national Church has its indefeasible rights, and that, apart from the support of any Œcumenical Council, the Pope's hands are tied. But without the support of kings, emperors, or parliaments, what would

all their protests avail them? Rome could and did condemn every doctrine that she pleased, and control the administration of the most far-distant diocese without power of appeal. The late decree of the Vatican Council, declaring the infallibility of the Pope, was the mere crystallisation into dogmatic form of a doctrine which was already in absolute possession of the Roman Church throughout the world.

This weakened, helpless Gallicanism it was which I found still striving for life among the English Catholic clergy and laity when I joined the Church of Rome. With some few of the priesthood it was a well-formed theological view, the result of serious study; but with most of those who held it, it was little more than an instinct and a tradition. It had been held and taught by their most distinguished teachers, whose memories were still held in veneration, with the exception of that vigorous, hard-hitting controversialist, Milner, the author of the 'End of Controversy,' who was an Ultramontane even in those moderate days. To Milner, however, every Englishman owes one debt of gratitude, as it was through his resolute opposition that Winchester Cathedral was saved from the depredations, under the name of improvements and restorations, which had made grievous havoc at Salisbury and elsewhere. It was, moreover, under the auspices of politicians taught in this school that

the Catholic Emancipation Act was carried, while the general character of the religious services in the Catholic Chapels was arranged in harmony with the temperate, anti-Italian tone of devotion which had long prevailed in England.

The distaste for the more fanatical devotions of southern Catholicism was, indeed, far more general among the old generation of priests and laymen than was any well-defined opinion as to councils and national Churches. But it was none the less positive and even bitter. They were all unimpeachably orthodox, but they disliked all pushing of the more sentimental elements of Catholicism to extremes. They disliked it themselves, and they dreaded its effects in irritating the Protestant world to a renewal of the old persecutions. The general tone of the piety of the old-fashioned English Catholic differed, indeed, but little from that of the old-fashioned English Churchman; and it was a piety, in both cases, which to my judgment is purer, nobler, and more really Christian than that new-fashioned, self-applauding zeal which now passes, in both churches alike, for the perfection of Christian mortification, activity, and fervour. The worship of Mary, with such men, was toned down to a practical value for her intercession as the most holy of women; confession was not perverted into an instrument for holding the timid soul in subjection; the

morbid excitements of incessant communions were discouraged; the worship of relics and the study of the extravagances of southern Saints' lives were scarcely known; indulgences were taught with moderation, and their inherently pernicious quality was more than half suspected; and, above all, English prayers were in use in almost every chapel, both at high mass itself, and in congregational devotions in general. The English Roman Catholicism of forty or fifty years ago, was, in truth, as unlike that which is now flourishing around us, as was the inner and outer life of the Church of England itself to that new development of vitality with which everybody is now familiar.

Into this quiet, sober, modest, religious life various elements of revolution were being cast just before I entered the Roman Communion. And curiously, indeed, was the situation complicated through the fact that one of the causes of disturbance proceeded from quarters where it would be least suspected. The introduction of reformed vestments, from surplices upwards, on the mediæval model, was taken up by the lovers of Ultramontanism and Italian notions of piety and Divine worship, and was vehemently resisted by men who in all other respects were upholders of national rights against Papal despotism. Roman architecture and Roman dresses were cherished with all the ardour of fanaticism,

by men who, but for the effects of personal antipathies would have been the first to welcome any æsthetic changes which should serve to connect English Catholicism with old English life. In reality such men were Conservatives. They had been accustomed to the architecture and vestments of their fathers, and those were of the same Italian type which is to be seen in the modern Anglican churches of the anti-Gothic period. At any rate, the surprise of new converts at what they saw sometimes took the form of amazement, and it was well for them if they did not find themselves involved in all the sharpness of personal partisanship.

The direct action of Rome in the affairs of diocesan administration was also coming to be felt, in some cases with no little harshness and unfairness. The dread of Rome as a power against which there was no appeal caused many a shrug in old-fashioned quarters, when sighs were suppressed, and the unwilling tongue kept dutiful silence. Especially offensive to the clergy of the old school was the introduction, at first by slow degrees, of foreign priests belonging to religious orders which had no root in England, and whose whole tone of thought was alien to the life-long habits of English Catholics. There was not only the ordinary English prejudice against all foreigners as such, from which the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood are no more free than are other

Englishmen; there was a very decided disapproval of the theology, the devotional language, and the notions on discipline, of these new intruders. Their views on Saints' lives, on asceticism, on miraculous legends, on devotions of a half sensual character to Jesus and Mary, and other kindred points, were often perfectly odious to the priest of the older school, who often, as much as he dared, spoke out his mind in the plainest words.

On one point, in particular, these foreign reformers of what they called a lax discipline soon began to work a strange influence, especially on the religious orders themselves, to which I ought, by all means, to refer. According to the habits which had long grown up in England, the personal intercourse between the laity and the clergy was easy and unrestrained; and the same harmless ease marked the intercourse of the inmates of convents and monasteries with the outer world. The views on celibacy and on the conventual vows which had come to be recognised by old English Catholics were untainted with that rigorism which is the product of southern countries, and which makes the history of foreign convents an alternation between an excessive laxity and an iron discipline. The one notion of the foreign monastic reformer is the necessity for the most absolute separation of the sexes, so far as human life makes it a possibility. They were possessed with the

idea that nothing but this imprisonment could keep men and women from thoughts and acts of deadly vileness. Accordingly, wherever they could, they brought about a diminution of the intercourse of the secular priests with general society, and turned convents and monasteries, as far as possible, into prison-houses. Nothing, for instance, in the old days, could be pleasanter than an occasional visit to the chaplain of some convent, enlivened with the conversation of a few intelligent nuns, gifted with that frankness and simplicity of manner which is to be found in any good example of the old-fashioned religious orders. And what it was with the women, so it was with the men. Undoubtedly, in the inner secrets of these older convents, as in all others, there were all the infirmities, little and serious, which thrive, almost rankly, in communities of single women. I am only saying that, while much is to be said for the English conventual life of old days, under the sway of foreign rigorism all is changed for the worse.

In particular, there is one element in the rigoristic theory of the modern imported system which I can speak of as nothing less than detestable; I mean that attempt at eradicating all human personal affections as the surest means for making the love of God supreme in the heart. In all times the triple vow of monasticism has been susceptible of different degrees of interpretation.

Every nun, monk, friar, and Jesuit takes a vow of poverty, celibacy, and obedience; but many have been the various views of conscientious men and women as to what constitutes the perfection of poverty and obedience. But still more striking have been their differences of theory as to what constitutes that spirit of 'detachment' from all created things, which is held to be the paramount aim of the monastic life. With some it is held that the love of God is best promoted by the utter destruction of all individual preferences for one human being over another, whether such preference were given to persons living in the world or out of it. With others, the cherishing of the love of kindred and friends is believed to be the natural stepping-stone to the all-pervading love of God, and the annihilation of the affections of the heart is condemned as a perverting and debasing error. The most distinguished, as well as one of the most ardent upholders of this latter view, was the great St Bernard, the last of the Fathers, as he is sometimes called, and the author of the now universally known hymn to Christ, '*Jesu dulcis memoria.*' The whole range of religious and secular literature can show nothing more pathetic and burning in their tenderness than Bernard's lamentations over the loss of his brother. And yet if ever there was a monk of the most perfect type, it was the renowned Abbot of Clairvaux. The foreigners, on

the contrary, who began to immigrate into England under the newly dominant auspices, especially favoured by Rome, taught that those love God best in whose hearts no throb of human affection is ever permitted to beat. I have myself heard an influential member of a monastic body, originally, too, an Oxford clergyman, declare that he thanked God that he had now arrived at a state in which he did not care a straw for any human being. Who can be surprised that such miserable and debasing conceptions of the nature of Divine love should have been as unwelcome as they were strange to the English Catholic of a purer and older generation?

CHAPTER XIV.

AMONG the especially foreign novelties introduced by the Ultramontane influence into the English Catholic body, was the system of 'Spiritual Retreats,' as they were called; a system which has found its imitators in the Anglican Church itself. When I myself entered the Roman Church, they were still very rare, and I witnessed at times the extreme reluctance with which they were adopted by the older priesthood. Spiritual Retreats were first reduced into their systematic form by Ignatius Loyola, and they have always been a favourite device with the Jesuits for awakening or confirming religious fervour. They had, however, fallen into abeyance with the English Jesuits, except that they were always practised, I believe, among the members of the Society itself. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the English Jesuitism of the period partook in its full degree of the quiet, conservative soberness which had possession of the English Catholic body in general. The English Jesuits were, indeed, one of the last sections of English life in which fanaticism of any kind was to be looked for.

To the Spiritual Retreat itself it is with much unwill-

ingness that I apply the word 'fanatical.' And yet it certainly is one of the results of that theory of human nature which is fertile in the wildest fanaticism. It is based on the supposition that permanent good effects can be wrought upon the conscience and the spiritual welfare of the soul by deliberately subjecting the mind to a long course of intensely stimulating influences. Its error, as I think, lies in confounding such deliberate and systematic excitement with the beneficial excitement which undoubtedly, in some few cases, is wrought upon men's natures by the occurrence of some terrible natural events, or with the apparently sudden and lasting change which is occasionally produced in quiet, steady, well-disposed natures by some influence seemingly quite inadequate to work such a result. A kind of caricature of these Retreats is familiar to those who have studied the eccentricities of Protestantism in the Methodist 'Revivals,' and the 'Camp Meetings' of America; just as the Methodist practice of confession is a caricature of the Roman practice. But it would be unfair to judge in either case of the systematic and carefully devised original by its extravagant caricature.

The Roman Spiritual Retreat is of three kinds: that which is practised by persons about to take holy orders or a monastic vow; that which consists in a temporary seclusion from the world, for the purpose of quickening

religious zeal, or determining upon one's future course of life; and an adaptation of the same device to the exigencies of a parish or district whose inhabitants cannot leave their ordinary occupations. The last of these three forms has been adopted by well-intentioned clergymen of different schools in the English Church.

During each of the two first forms of the Retreat, the devout Catholic is secluded altogether from society, and sees only the priest who undertakes his spiritual direction for the time being, except that he takes his full part in assisting at such masses and religious services as may be within reach. When the Retreat is fully carried out, this seclusion is absolute, and no intercourse, either by letter or otherwise, is permitted with the outside world. Its length varies, ordinarily, from a week to a month, which last enormous prolongation can, however, be attempted only in case of strong physical health, and is rarely, I believe, if ever, attempted in England. An English prelate, who went through the whole course of four weeks in Rome, previous to his ordination, described to me its effect upon himself as having 'made him black in the face.'

The principle of the Retreat, as may be seen in Loyola's 'Spiritual Exercises,' which is the model on which it is conducted, is to bring the soul face to face with all the tremendous realities of the invisible world, according to

the Roman view, including such subjects as sin, death, judgment, heaven and hell, human helplessness, the atonement of Christ, the temptations of Satan, and the peril of those who halt between two opinions; and when the soul is thus overwhelmed with its meditations, to lead it to make its choice between God and the world, or to renew the good choice if it has already been made. The stimulating effect of such meditations, when the mind is separated from all ordinary influences, and is wrought upon by the daily exhortations of the director who has it in his power, can easily be understood. The influence of such a mingling of stimulating and paralysing thoughts in inducing young minds to embrace the conventual or the clerical life is, also, as may be supposed, most powerful. The cool judgment loses all controlling power, and the result is a triumph of nothing less than a fatal fanaticism.

The second variety of the Retreat was that which was coming slowly into vogue when I first learnt the real nature of Catholicism from within. The local clergy were being urged by such bishops as were themselves led away by the movement, to come together for a few days, for the purpose of preaching the same system of self-examination and renewal of their obligations to God, the Retreat being conducted by some foreign priest, or some Italianised Englishman who was supposed to be an

adept in working up men's minds to these periodical excitements. Those who cordially submitted to the episcopal injunctions were at first very few; and I suspect that, to this day, the number of priests who, with their whole judgment, approve of them, are in a minority among their brethren. It was not, however, the priesthood alone who adopted the system. The laity, in small numbers, practised the same device for increasing their religious fervour, and the system came to be common, if not universal, in convents and monasteries. So far as I have ever been able to learn the effects of the practice, it has always been either nugatory or injurious. Now and then I can imagine that it may have stirred up the inmates of some 'religious' house to a more literal observance of their vows. But, as a rule, I entertain not the slightest doubt that the Retreat is nothing more than a form of spiritual dram-drinking, and has no more beneficial effects upon the permanent health of the soul than a week's intoxication has upon the health of the body.

And such, in a lesser degree, I believe to be the effect of the preaching of those missions or public Retreats which have been adopted by some of the Catholic priesthood, for the purpose of exciting the flagging zeal of their flocks. I know that the old-fashioned clergy who were persuaded to try them were generally satisfied

that the ultimate result was a lowering of the morals and piety of their people. They were wrought up to a high pitch of excitement by the incessant services and the peculiar style of oratory in favour with the preachers who have the direction of these revivals. But, as every sensible person must have expected, while here and there some heedless or vicious man was reclaimed, the reaction upon the minds of steady-going, ordinary religious persons was disastrous. Utterly exaggerated, and therefore false, ideas of a devout life were put before them, while the doctrines of Catholicism were presented to their heated imagination in the most exciting or terrifying shapes. In fact, these devices are little better than a kind of spiritual debauch, whose after effects are languor, deadness to religious motives, and an increased tendency towards the enjoyments of the thoroughly irreligious life.

This passion for applying a violent stimulus to the feelings is, indeed, far too common with the more ascetic section of the Roman clergy, and especially in more southern countries. It results, in a large degree, from the perverted notions on morals and on spiritual perfection which were the result of the Roman doctrine of celibacy and the monastic state. I do not say that such a belief in the efficacy of spiritual stimulants is universal in them. But it is, unhappily, by no means rare; and

when it takes a calmer form it is apt to be transformed into that 'quietism' of which Madame Guyon and Fenélon himself supply the examples best known to the Protestant reader. In all cases, the zealous preacher or writer is led astray through his misconception of the reality of human nature, and his forgetfulness that religious perfection consists in the formation of character, in which, by slow degrees and an incessant repetition of the acts of ordinary life fulfilled with a pure and self-denying aim, the harmonious action of all the faculties and desires which God has given us becomes habitual, and almost easy.

The preparation for the 'First Communion' is one of those occasions in which preachers who believe in the usefulness of strong stimulants are wont to indulge in their favourite style of excitements; and their subjects, or rather their victims, are, for the most part, young girls. These pernicious workings up of the tender emotions are rare, I believe, in England; but they are not quite unknown. With the more excitable races of the south they are more frequent. The preaching is more stimulating, and the passionate nature of girlhood is more easily wrought upon. An English Catholic prelate has assured me that he has seen girls going up to the altar to receive their first Communion in a state of absolute hysteria, so frightfully exciting were the exhortations which they had just heard from the pulpit.

The general character of the English Roman Catholic preaching, I may as well add, as I am upon the subject, is dull and tame. I have not heard a great deal of it, for I soon found it unendurable. Its quality is injured by the almost universal practice of preaching unwritten sermons by a body of men who do not make the art of preaching a matter of careful study. As a rule, the culture of the English priests is extremely slight, from the literary point of view, while their theological knowledge is confined to the acquisition of such outlines of dogmatic and moral theology as will enable them just to pass muster at ordination and to act as confessors. Their sermons are consequently monotonous and full of repetitions. To do them justice, they by no means pride themselves upon the quality of their preaching as a body; and I have at times been condoled with on the inferiority of the sermons I must hear as a Catholic, as compared with those which I was accustomed to as a Protestant. I of course assured them that if they thought all Anglican sermons as a rule were worth hearing, they were grievously mistaken.

There is another custom among Catholics generally, which tends to depreciate the standard of their preaching. The rule of the Church makes it obligatory upon all persons to hear mass on Sundays and on what are called days of obligation, being the High Festivals of the year.

But inasmuch as in the larger number of churches and chapels two or more masses are said on such days, while a sermon is preached at the high mass only, a large number of men, especially educated men, make it a practice to assist at one of the low masses only, thus avoiding the sermon altogether. The same system enables those who dislike much music, whether because it is music at all, or because it is music ill performed, to gratify their disinclinations with a safe conscience. Hence there is no encouragement to preachers to take any great pains in the preparation of their sermons, or in the cultivation of preaching as an art. They do not look upon preaching as so important an element of clerical duty as English clergymen regard it. If nature has not made them good preachers, it cannot be helped. Their defects, they think, will not much impair their ministerial efficiency; and if they are placed in large towns, in company with other priests, no very large share of this part of his duty will fall to each individual man.

To this hindrance to success must be added another, which may seem trivial in its character, but which unquestionably falls in with others of the same tendency. If a priest is alone in charge of a district or mission, as it is generally called, he must preach, fasting, at about midday. He is allowed to say two masses, for the sake

of the congregation, who cannot all come at the same hour—one at eight or nine, and the other at eleven; and, by a rule which is never allowed to be broken, he must have eaten and drunk nothing whatsoever since the previous midnight before he celebrates the second mass, except the small quantity of wafer and wine which he consumes at the first mass. According to custom, the sermon which he preaches at the second mass, which is generally lengthened out by music, is preached after the Gospel, and consequently fasting; and what must be the effect of such a practice upon ordinary preachers it is needless to say. All but unusually robust men must be in a condition of comparative exhaustion, especially when the morning's fatigue has been increased by the hearing of confessions. The quiet routine of the rest of the mass, said in a low voice, and some of it quite inaudibly, can be gone through. But what is meant by good and effective preaching, especially without the aid of any manuscript, is clearly out of the question.

Such were some of the chief elements in the English Catholic community when its latent elements of confusion and revolution were suddenly roused into fresh activity by the introduction of the large band of converts. They had been few, and mostly unimportant, until the time that I am describing; but within a few months afterwards the tide set in strongly, and the agitation, both within the

Church which they had left and within that which they entered, was soon at its height. The full effects of the introduction of the convert element were, indeed, long before they appeared. It was only as time went on that it was understood that an impulse had been given, partly to the cultivation of the Catholic body, and partly to the exaggerated and Ultramontane movement, which, after a few years, was felt throughout the whole country. It is difficult to believe how utterly unlike is the thorough Oxford clerical and English mind to that which was the average type of the English Roman Catholic both of the quiet, good old school and of the newly-imported continental and Italianised type. That the converts should ever have mingled with the old Catholics at all, to the extent to which they soon did really mingle, was owing partly to the excess of convert zeal and enthusiasm, partly to the controlling and despotic influences of Rome, wherever she makes herself obeyed, and partly to the genuine sincerity of most of the old English priesthood. Indeed, the rise in power and position which Rome has attained in England during the last five-and-twenty years is to be attributed, I cannot but think, almost entirely to the inspiring and invigorating influences of the large body of Anglican converts themselves.

As was natural, the new converts, for the most part, adopted, to a considerable extent, the views of the

Ultramontane school. With few exceptions, their aim in submitting to Rome was to escape from the endless perplexities and uncertainties involved in the Anglican theory. Rome, as they held, was the divinely appointed channel for the interpretation of the revelation of Jesus Christ; and the Ultramontane theory offering the quickest, the easiest, and the surest method for deciding all questions, whether doctrinal or practical, appeared to their minds to be the only thoroughly consistent form of Catholicism. Gallicanism, in all its forms, they looked on as something heretical in its essence. They wanted some means for solving difficulties that should be easily and always accessible, and that should be submitted to by all parties with absolute obedience.

At the same time, I myself, with some others, and with many of the old Catholics, was firmly convinced of the truth of the assertion put forth by some English priests and bishops, that there was no real antagonism between Roman doctrine and secular philosophy, science, and searching literary criticism. The hostility between Roman principles of inquiry and those of sound reason in general, appeared to me to result from a misconception. Believing that reason, rightly employed, cannot possibly lead men astray, I was satisfied that the time would come when the absolute harmony between reason and Catholicism would in the end be made clear as the

day. And I soon made up my mind it was my function to devote myself to promoting that general culture of the English Catholic body in which, as I soon found, they were grievously deficient. I should add, also, that both among the clergy and laity I found many who felt with me. There were many, indeed, who, I am convinced, hailed the introduction of the new converts, not merely on theological grounds, but because they expected from them an infusion of that love of science and literature whose absence they themselves had been long deploring.

All this seemed to me to be natural enough. But what did very soon surprise me was the depth of the hostile feelings existing between individuals and communities, who yet were absolutely united in their religious belief. From St Augustine's I went to pay a visit at another college, Hurstfield Hall, and to various Catholic friends in its neighbourhood, to whom I was introduced in another part of England. The introduction to the authorities of Hurstfield was given to me by Dr Thornycroft himself, although the tone in which he spoke of it, and of the bishop who had founded it, and who was lately dead, implied no cordiality of feeling whatever.

I was very kindly received by the clergy who were living at Hurstfield, especially by the Superior, Dr Markham, who clearly rejoiced in the hope that Oxford was about to supply to English Catholicism just that

literary enlightenment which it so much needed. He was an unassuming, intelligent, and essentially gentlemanly man; who went through his duties quietly and regularly, and, as I afterwards began to see, with a certain undertone of sadness in all that he said, and even in his countenance. I soon formed a high opinion of him, and that opinion I retained to the last. He was of the old school, but his life had been marred through some of those mistakes from which no man is free. He said nothing in the least disparaging of Dr Thornycroft and of St Augustine's, but the absence of all sympathy could not be completely concealed. Others in the College were less reticent, but I very soon found that there was a whole class of topics on which they all shrank from speaking to me, as a stranger, partly from their extreme painfulness, and partly from not knowing how far I should see affairs in the same light as they saw them.

CHAPTER XV.

I WAS dining one day with Mr Arkright, a gentleman in the neighbouring town of Newlands, when I first was enlightened as to the facts of the case.

'I was rather surprised, Mr Seymour,' he said to me, as we were sitting alone after dinner, 'to hear that Dr Thornycroft had sent you to Hurstfield. I hope it means that his feelings are less bitter than they used to be.'

I could only express my extreme surprise, and added that I could not conceive how any man could entertain angry thoughts towards so amiable a man as Dr Markham seemed to be.

'An admirable man, indeed he is,' replied Arkright; 'but I suppose you have heard nothing as yet of the history of the College, and what its founder, who was a sincere friend of mine, had to go through.'

'It was founded by Bishop Warminster,' I answered, 'was it not? That is all I have heard. But nobody either in the College or in Newlands seems to like to say much about it.'

'Have you met either of the priests at the lower chapel here in Newlands?' asked Arkright.

'Once or twice,' I said, 'but they froze up the moment I began to say anything about the College and Dr Markham. But what puzzled me most was the unaccountable look they put on when I asked if they often exchanged duties with Dr Markham at the little chapel that he serves here in Newlands. They could hardly have looked more put out if I had asked whether they ever preached in the chief Dissenting meeting-house. I saw there was a screw loose somewhere, so I judiciously held my tongue.'

'It's been a miserable business from the beginning,' said Arkright. 'Personally, I have taken neither one side nor the other, and I don't like to express any opinion. But I can't help wishing that poor Dr Warminster had been alive to have made your acquaintance. Everybody, or nearly everybody, liked him.'

He would tell me nothing more that day; but not long afterwards he was more communicative. I had heard all sorts of things hinted at, which, to me, in my exceeding simplicity, seemed marvellous, viewing, as I did, all the doings of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and priesthood through rosy-tinted spectacles.

'Ah, well!' said Arkright, 'you've heard so much that you had better hear more; and you'd better hear it

from me, who am not a redhot partisan, than from any one who looks at Dr Warminster as either a rogue or a martyr.'

'It's true, then,' I rejoined, 'that Dr Warminster was under a cloud during the last years of his life.'

'Undoubtedly,' said Arkright; 'but, in my judgment, most unjustly. You must be aware, Mr Seymour, that some of you gentlemen who become Catholics, are not always the fairest of judges as to the real state of affairs in the Church you have joined.'

Of course I assented.

'Well,' pursued Arkright, 'I must do the converts who excited Dr Warminster's anger the justice to say that they were upheld and excited by old Catholics, who ought to have known better. But as it was, there was a small knot of men, priests and laymen, gentlemen born every one of them, who were smitten with a love for the ultra-Roman development of certain Catholic doctrines and practices, which are strange to the moderate old Catholics of this country.'

'But would not the Roman developments be those which every good Catholic would wish to adopt?' I asked.

'That is the whole question,' he replied.

'The most wise and prudent theologians hold that while the Catholic faith is everywhere the same, it

exhibits itself in modes of expression and devout practices which vary according to circumstances.'

'I don't see that,' I said very foolishly. 'And surely, if there is any doubt on the matter, Rome itself is the best authority for settling the difficulty.'

'Rome itself has often taken the very opposite view,' said Arkright, 'and has pointedly assured the local bishops that they themselves are the only capable judges as to what is expedient.'

'But why should there be any differences between the worship of one country and that of another,' I asked.

'I am no theologian, Mr Seymour,' said Arkright; 'but I am a lawyer; and a lawyer, you know, likes to have his reasons for everything. And I understand that the practices of religion are rightly modified, in things not essential, for two reasons: first, to suit the varieties of national temperament; and, secondly, out of consideration for the prejudices and bigotry of the Protestantism or the Paganism of the people among whom Catholics may be living.'

At that time I was of course in the early convert stage of feeling, and held it to be mere cowardice, and a mistaken policy into the bargain, to consult the prepossessions of Protestants in any way whatever, though I daresay if I had been put to the test I should have practically

remembered St Paul's injunction not to let our good be evil spoken of. I was therefore rather predisposed than otherwise against Dr Warminister when I heard the story that Arkright proceeded to tell me. In after days I came to think of these things in a very different way. All I said, however, was that Arkright's views seemed reasonable enough, but that I did not much like anything that had a Gallican look.

'Well,' resumed Arkright, 'I daresay there were misunderstandings on both sides. But the fact was, that the men I spoke of imported sundry Italian devotions and notions, as we thought them, into this district; and began to stir up the quiet old people most unpleasantly, and, as poor Dr Warminster thought, in a fanatical and scandal-giving direction.'

'But were these things really Catholic or not?' I interrupted.

'It was not denied that they were theoretically defensible,' said he; 'but Dr Warminster, being the vicar-apostolic of the district, considered himself the only authoritative judge on the question of their expediency; and in consequence, as the men in question refused to obey him, he issued a pastoral condemning their proceedings. Poor fellow! he little knew what a hornet's nest he was plunging his hand into.'

'What next?' I inquired.

'The persons he had censured,' continued he, 'and I do not deny their zeal, or their right to do what they did, from their own point of view, carried the case to Rome, and in plain English denounced the bishop's pastoral. Of course, Rome instantly took their side. On such occasions Rome always takes the part of the Ultramontane laity or priests against the local bishop, who is supposed to have decided views as to episcopal privileges. I forget all the miserable details. The bishop saw from the first that everything was going dead against him, and that the Propaganda was resolved to make a victim of him. At first, indeed, he was confident of the justice of his cause, knowing that he was only exercising unquestionable episcopal rights; but he soon found his mistake.'

'But I thought the Papal decrees were always in harmony with the canon law,' I suggested.

'Doubtless,' said he; 'but what is the use of a vast body of canon law against the decision of an individual judge, from which there is no appeal? The Pope, that is, the Propaganda, and the Roman Court in general, are absolute. And our bishops, being only vicars-apostolic, are specially helpless against them.'

'I've never yet heard,' I said, 'what is the practical difference between ordinary bishops and vicars-apostolic.'

'The vicars-apostolic,' said he, 'are just what their

name implies; they are the deputies or representatives of the Apostolic See for episcopal purposes, in countries where the regular Catholic hierarchy is not established. Of course they are regularly consecrated bishops, only they do not live in their own sees, where there are no Catholics for them to govern; and they are sent to places like England as Papal delegates.'

'Just like curates in the Church of England,' I suggested.

'So far like them,' he replied, 'that they are absolutely under the Pope's orders. He can deprive a vicar-apostolic of his functions simply by his own will, whether or not any canonical offence has been committed, and without seeking the verdict of any tribunal.'

'Well,' I asked, 'how did it end?'

'Wretchedly for poor Dr Warminster,' he replied. 'After all sorts of explanations and counter-charges, and that interminable delay which you will hear the most loyal Catholics attribute to Rome's proceedings'——

'I have heard it already,' I interrupted. 'It is said that there are two anagrams, of which the word *Roma* is susceptible, *Mora* and *amor*.'

'Yes, I know,' said Arkright. 'In this case Dr Warminster found there was not much of the *amor* experienced by him. He was at last summoned personally to Rome. He went a broken-down man, and he

was so satisfied that he would be deprived of his office here, and never allowed to come back, that he, to my knowledge, divested himself of all property that he possessed, whether his own or on trust, before he left the country. He believed himself to be the object of an enmity that would never rest till he was ruined.'

'But surely he did come back,' I said. 'I always understood that he died at the College at Hurstfield.'

'Yes,' said Arkright, 'he came back, broken-down utterly, to die, overwhelmed with the shame they put him to, and with the money responsibilities he had incurred in founding and keeping up the College. If some day you ask Dr Markham, who was devotedly attached to him, he will show you the pastoral he was compelled to issue when he came back from Rome, withdrawing what he had said before. I am told that in private he had to make still more humiliating apologies to the persons whose enmity he had incurred, some of whom were people with whom Rome desired to keep on good terms. All, of course, is kept as secret as possible, for fear of what Protestants would think of it.'

'You say,' I replied, 'that Dr Markham was devoted to Dr Warminster. I never hear a word of bitterness from him against any one.'

'Many others were equally devoted to him,' said Ark-

right. 'His chaplain, who slept in the room immediately under the bishop's, told me that he used continually to hear him moaning in his uncontrollable sorrow; and that the first thing that made him suspect that there was anything fatally wrong was the perfect silence overhead. He went up, and found the poor bishop dead.'

'Was this humiliation from Rome the only cause of this unhappy end of Dr Warminster?' I asked. 'As far as I can make out at Hurstfield, they seem to be always in debt, and to have no end of subjects they don't like to talk about.'

'How do you yourself get on with them, if I may venture to ask?' said Arkright.

'Oh! very well indeed,' I answered. 'They are mostly a rather roughish set; and, except Dr Markham, I can't say I care much for their society.'

'Ah! well, Mr Seymour,' he replied, 'you must excuse that. You know we have laboured under not a few disadvantages for centuries. Our colleges are mere makeshifts; and our priests don't come as a rule from the same class as the Protestant clergy. Then our aristocracy are intensely proud; and we have few of those middle classes of professional men and small landed proprietors, who fill up English Protestant society between the highest and the lowest. I hope you converts will do something towards curing this evil.'

This was all so new to me, that I hardly knew what to say; and Arkright continued—

'Indeed,' he said, 'my poor friend, Dr Warminster, was so sensible of this, that it was to help in giving our laity a better education that he got into all his difficulties with the College; and these difficulties helped to kill him. He was borne down with the pressure of debt from the day he bought the old building, and set to converting it into what it now is.'

'How in the world, being a poor man himself,' I asked, 'did he manage to raise the funds?'

'Borrowed it, of course,' said Arkright.

'But on what security?' I inquired.

'That is the wretched part of the business,' he replied. 'There are always pious people with money, ready to help what they think the good cause; and he got at some other funds, not wisely, but not dishonestly, whatever his enemies may say.'

'All this I can understand,' I replied; 'but what I can't make out is the ill feeling that I see plainly exists between the College and the Basilian monks. Why in the world is there no intercourse between them, and why will both sides put on such mysterious looks when anything touching on the subject happens to be mentioned?'

'I don't pretend to have any opinion on the rights of the story,' said Arkright. 'I only can tell you the facts,

[illegible]

[illegible] Dr Warminster [illegible] Basilian monk [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"Very well. I've no doubt," said Arkright. "But you won't see any Jesuits at Hurstfield. But we are wandering away from Dr Warminster. The unfortunate thing was this, that he had three or four especial friends of his own among the Basilians, who, he thought, would be most useful to him in his work as a bishop, and above all in carrying out his schemes about Hurstfield and the

improvement of education. There is no denying that he was an ambitious man, and wanted to be a power among English Catholics, and Protestants too, for he was personally very popular with everybody.'

'I have heard him abused for this very thing,' I observed.

'People are excessively malicious,' returned Arkright; 'and those who were utterly unable to make themselves as popular in general society called the bishop a popularity hunter. I wish all our bishops and clergy were as agreeable as he was. It would be far better for the Catholic cause in England.'

'Do Catholics and Protestants mix together much in general society?' I inquired.

'Not much,' said Arkright, 'and the zealous men of both sides less than others. I myself find no difficulty in getting on with Protestants, both clergymen and laymen, but it's not a common thing.'

'But how about Dr Warminster and these monks of St Basil?' I pursued.

'What he did was this,' said Arkright: 'he got these three or four friends of his secularised, and they left the order. Whether they took with them certain property which they said belonged to them, I really don't know. The whole affair created such an intense bitterness that it's difficult to get at the real facts.'

'All this is perfectly amazing to me,' I exclaimed. 'I thought no monk could leave his order, because his vows were for life. And how could those who left the order have any property of their own? I thought every man gave up all that he had absolutely to the order when he took the vow.'

'Why, of course, the Pope could dispense with the original vow,' said he. 'As he is the representative of God in receiving the vow, he is naturally entitled to absolve any man from it, if he thinks fit. But what made this case so extremely irritating to the Basilians was the ground on which Dr Warminster got the dispensation. Of course, he was absolved himself by the mere fact of his being made a bishop. The reason that was given for the secularising of these other men was some pretence about a defect in their original vows. So at least it is said. They got a decree at Rome, declaring that they had never rightly become monks at all, through the existence of some unsuspected obstacle. They had thus been secular priests all along, and such property as they could prove to have brought with them never rightly belonged to the order at all, and they were entitled to do what they liked with it.'

'But where was the harm of all this?' I asked.

'Legally speaking, none,' said Arkright. 'It was the *animus* of the whole thing that gave it the sting. It had

the look of a sneaking, shirking way of getting rid of their obligations to the order, to which their secession certainly did a great deal of harm.' I daresay there were strong personal feelings involved in it from the first. But it was a wretched business altogether.'

'And how did the bishop get on afterwards with the order?' I asked, 'especially as they have a monastery actually in his own diocese.'

'Miserably,' he said. 'The quarrels were endless, and I believe at one time they went so far that the bishop actually took away all their faculties from the monks in his diocese.'

'Was not that a frightful piece of tyranny?' I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.

'Then, in that case,' I continued, 'they could no longer hear confessions, or act in any way as priests in their public chapels'

'Undoubtedly,' said Arkright.

'It seems to me,' I went on, 'that the Catholic bishops have tremendous power in their hands. What could the monks do in such a case as this?'

'Why with them the remedy would be easy. Every great religious order, you understand, is immensely powerful at Rome, and any appeal to the Pope would be at once backed up with irresistible influence. But as

for the secular priests, they tell me that appeals to Rome against a bishop's decisions are useless.'

'But how is that consistent,' I said, 'with all you told me about Dr Warminster's being compelled to revoke his pastoral?'

'Don't you see the difference?' he replied. 'In that case the bishop was taking the English line against the Ultramontanes. In such a case, the recalcitrant priests and laymen are on the Pope's own side against the bishop, and, therefore, the bishop goes to the wall. I should tell you also that when a monk is made a bishop, he generally remains loyal to his own order, if he is really good for anything. He throws off as little as possible of its practices and feelings; he even makes a difference in his dress. On the other hand, this affair of Dr Warminster and his friends was looked upon as disloyal to the last degree. But, now, tell me, do not all these stories about disunions stagger you a little in your confidence as to the truth of Catholics? I am used to them, and think of them only as abuses. But I should fancy that to a convert, or to a Protestant, they would seem the most outrageous of scandals.'

'They certainly surprise me,' I answered, 'but they strike me also as abuses, and nothing more. At the same time they are abominably disagreeable, I must confess.'

CHAPTER XVI.

AND thus, in fact, it was with all other failures in attaining the high ideal which I had attributed to the inner life of Rome, when I first entered her communion. They had no effect in making me doubt the reality of her claims. No doubt I was at first in that condition of excitement which prevents the mind from seeing facts as they are. I was, moreover, so abundantly satisfied in two matters of the utmost moment, that all other matters faded into dimness. In the first place, I was rejoiced to find myself in a community where there was unity and definite clearness of doctrine and a conviction that this clearness was the result of the Divine guidance of a living and accessible Authority. And, in the second place, the beauty, appropriateness, and (according to the Roman doctrine) the naturalness, of the various religious services, satisfied my devotional desires and my æsthetic tastes, and contrasted profoundly with what I considered the inconsistencies, the baldness, and the coldness of Anglican worship.

At the same time I was far from abstaining from all criticism of the artistic qualities of the Roman functions

as actually embodied in the various chapels. I say 'chapels;' for in those days the use of the word 'church' was rare as applied to a Roman Catholic building. As I have said, I entered the Roman Church at the time of the thickest fire between æsthetic conservatives and reformers, both in the way of architecture, vestments, and music, and my personal predilections were all on the reforming side. All these things did not touch the question of doctrine, though the irritations which accompanied these hostile æsthetics by no means struck me as the natural fruit of the religion of peace and love. As far as I know they were fiercer than any similar display of anger that I ever knew within the Church of England; unless, perhaps, they have been nearly equalled in the case of the quarrels, not yet ended, concerning the decorations of St Paul's Cathedral. These quarrels only want the wit, the knowledge, and the capacity and good will for hard-hitting of the late Augustus Welby Pugin, to be equal in their way to any artistic battles which I have known among English Roman Catholics.

Nevertheless, the perception of the jealousies, rivalries, and ill-will of parties and persons, especially ecclesiastics, in the Roman Church, did ultimately clear my mind for a dispassionate re-examination of its doctrine and aims. They acted on me just as several years of observations of the characteristic internal faults of Anglicanism at

length loosened the filial devotion with which I had originally regarded the Church of England. The argumentative weight of the lamentable absence of Christian charity as the ruling power in the administration of Catholic affairs by degrees powerfully affected my views towards her rulers, and the system they acted upon. I do not say for a moment that I observed a want of Christian charity in all her members, either lay or clerical, secular or monastic. Far from it, indeed. I have known many whose virtue has reached an almost ideal standard of perfection, with the one drawback, that it is always slightly lowered by the narrowing influences of the Roman doctrine concerning the married and the unmarried state.

In one point especially, Roman Catholics, when they really attain a high standard, are faultless to an extent which is rare among those Protestants who may be classed as, on the whole, their spiritual equals; and that is, in respect to their manner of speaking of other person's faults. The strictest Catholic writers teach that Christian charity forbids us ever to speak of the moral faults of other persons without some real reason; that is, never to do this for the sake of idle gossip, or for the sake of giving uncalled-for information. The view is nearly identical with the English law of libel, which punishes all speaking of a man's moral conduct or character in

such a way as to do him injury in his reputation, and does not admit of the plea of justification on the ground of the truth of the libel, unless public interest requires the statement to be made. In reality, this spiritual rule is often very difficult of application, and it is not easy to decide what talk is charitable or the reverse. I have known the rigid adherence to the rule productive both of mischievous and narrow-minded scrupulosity, and serious inconvenience besides. And indeed, after so many years of personal experience of the inner life of Catholicism and Protestantism, I have come to the conclusion that the practice of charitable conversation, unhampered by ignorant scrupulosity, is one of the rarest and also one of the most difficult of virtues.

Here, also, I should perhaps remind my readers that in everything that I say under fictitious names and circumstances, I am only describing the inner life of the Roman Church in England so far as my own personal experience warrants me in speaking. Whatever I say, though not literally true, is typically true, as I have known it, or as I have heard it from a few others who have spoken from their own personal knowledge. Of the life of the Roman Church, as I have not experienced it, I pretend to give no account. Of foreign Catholic life I know no personal knowledge. I have never been out of England since the day, now eight-and-twenty

years ago, when I submitted to Rome. The real state of Roman Catholicism may therefore be worse than I found it, or it may be better.

I believe, at the same time, that my own experience may have been exceptionally good; but I speak with hesitation. One thing, indeed, I may say without fear of error: In no part of the world is Roman Catholicism a more spiritual and intelligent religion than it is in England; and in few countries does it exhibit so many good qualities as in this country. Between its spiritual character as here attained and that of the Church of England I do not attempt to draw any contrast, except to say that I like the Church of England type the better of the two. As to the popular notion that Romanism, as existing in England, is not a spiritual religion, which does not foster the direct intercourse of the soul with God, and encourage an absolute dependence upon Him for all good things, the idea is too absurd for serious refutation. I have long come to disbelieve its claims; but I know that it is no more a mere mass of idolatries, superstition, and formalisms than is the Church of England itself.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOOKING back now across the long succession of many years, and judging things by the light of renewed reflection, I still find myself thinking as I always used to think on one subject, full of suggestiveness as to the reality of the religious sincerity of the old English Roman Catholics; I mean the manner in which they received the influx of the converts who, in 1845, began to throng into the Church in somewhat bewildering numbers. The old Catholic body, it must be remembered, was at that time in circumstances still wearing the gloss of novelty, and their internal condition was little known to the world at large. They were only just beginning to realise the full effects of the Emancipation Act, and of the diminution of the old intense hostility of English Protestants to all that bore the name of Rome. As I have already said, they laboured under the immense disadvantage of not possessing a perfect social body, in all its completeness. They had an old aristocracy and gentry, not numerous, but wealthy, and a hundred years behind the Protestant aristocracy and gentry of England. These families were ridiculously proud and exclusive,

and knew nothing of those endless gradations of social positions by which the Protestant peerage is united to the humblest of the labouring classes. Their professional men were few, and were held in a lower esteem than is usual in the non-Catholic world.

Of the wealthy and cultivated English mercantile world, hardly any, if any, were Roman Catholics. To find the servants of Rome it was necessary to go down to the third and fourth ranks of the trading world; and of these many, as was natural, would studiously conceal their creed. It was the same among the poor, except in certain parts in the North of England. In Lancashire and other neighbouring districts, the 'old religion,' as they called it, had always been upheld by a fair proportion of the farmers and labourers; and here the 'old religion' was of a more free, bold, and unsophisticated type than elsewhere. The same manly, if somewhat rough character, was to be seen in the northern priests themselves, who for the most part sprang from the population among whom they afterwards passed their lives. As I have said, I naturally knew little of the disreputable portion of the clergy, if such there were, and the same with respect to the idle priests, who are numerous enough in every ecclesiastic community. How far the Italianising influences of the last twenty or thirty years may have told upon the typical north-country priest, I

have no means of judging; but I should think that they must still retain many of the better qualities which we associate with the name of Englishman.

As a rule in a society thus constituted, the priesthood did not spring from the higher classes of society. A few came from the noble and aristocratic families, and of these many became Jesuits. If I may judge from my own experience, I should say that the priests who were of this origin were among the best of their order for sincerity and devotion to their calling. And this was what was to be expected. It was a very serious descent in the social scale for a youth brought up even among the Catholic aristocracy and gentry to bind himself for life to the average society of the English priests, and of such society as they found among their congregations. A man of literary and refined tastes thereby condemned himself to something like social solitude for life. Such sacrifices were, therefore, rarely made, except under the impulse of a strong feeling of duty, and of a belief in the holy character of the profession which the neophyte was embracing.

The priesthood, in general, sprang from totally different classes from those which supply the ranks of the English clergy. In the North, some came from the yeoman and respectable tradesman class, and a few, here and there, from the professional class. But with

the majority, the adoption of the clerical profession brought with it a decided rise in the social scale. Many came from the very poorest ranks, and from the families of the humblest tradesmen. And it is this rise in position which tempts many a young man into the Catholic priesthood. He sees that he will be entering a profession, which, theoretically at least, is accounted that of a gentleman, and he observes that a good deal of outward deference, so far as he knows, is paid to priests and bishops by the fine ladies and gentlemen who would not dream of regarding himself as worthy of the slightest notice. He hears, it is true, that the incomes of the priests are not large, but he is certain that they are generally more than he can expect if he takes to any secular occupation. He likes the ceremonial, too, in which the priest plays the important part. The thought that he himself may one day be a bishop, an archbishop, a cardinal, and even a Pope, weighs for something in his doubting mind when he is considering whether after all he can make up his mind to perpetual celibacy.

And on this particular point, it must be remembered, that it is at a very youthful age that the aspirant to the priesthood is induced to begin to make up his mind. He begins, as a rule, to regard himself as a 'Church boy' while he is still little better than a child. A subtle, but all-powerful net-work of associations and hopes

begins to bind itself around him from very early years, and he is flattered with the notion that God Himself is distinguishing him from his fellows by a special 'vocation' to a higher life. And thus he goes on, from year to year, till he finds himself at last a young man, so hampered, dazzled, and eager, that all calm forethought is impossible, and he can no more realise what it is that he is going to pledge himself to, than he can realise what it is to be an old man of ninety, tottering on the verge of the grave.

Into this singularly constituted lay and clerical society, the Oxford converts, as they were called, flung themselves with all the energy of enthusiasm, and all the recklessness of most limited information. And I think it is much to the credit of both parties that on the whole they amalgamated so fairly. Many of the clergy and laity, no doubt, could not bear the converts, and were shy of them, jealous of them, and disposed to think ill of them. But this was not the case with the great majority of the more zealous and the more intelligent either of the priesthood or the laity. There can be no doubt that they must often have found these converts somewhat trying to their patience and their humility. The converts were better educated men. They belonged to a different class of society; and with all their sincere desire to be obedient members of the Church they had

entered, they must at times let it be seen that they thought many things 'slow,' or timid, or not sufficiently Roman to suit their own Ultramontane ideas. As a rule, of course, they associated chiefly with old Catholics of rather extreme views, who regarded their zeal and occasional eccentricities with sympathy rather than with disapproval. Still, on the whole, they were somewhat of a trial to the temper and modesty of their elders.

Nevertheless, as I have said, I think the two parties fused together wonderfully well. The old Catholics tolerated the faults of their new brothers, through an honest value for their zeal, and from a belief that the abilities and the cultivation which they brought to the Roman Church would be for her real advantage and for the good of religion. Of course, I speak only from my own experience, and from what I have heard from others. And I may fairly claim to be heard in praise of the feelings with which the converts were received, because, as time went on, I found myself in vehement controversy with many, both converts and old Catholics and both laymen and priests of all ranks up to the highest; in fact, few persons, if any, found themselves in so much painful newspaper and magazine controversy as myself, owing to the free expression of my opinions. At the same time, the support I received was as warm as were the censures which I encountered; and if at times I was treated with

the same unfairness which is the lot of all persons who venture to criticise the proceedings of the dominant powers, whether embodied in official authority or in mere public opinion, I must at the same time acknowledge most heartily the candour and friendship which I have met with elsewhere.

At present, the free expression of honest opinion seems crushed in the whole Roman Church, and as much in England as elsewhere. Those only are satisfied who believe in the popular Ultramontane saying, '*Roma locuta est, causa finita est.*' The voice of freedom is silent, and men and women can only think silently in the sadness of their hearts. English converts have played a prominent part in helping the enactment of the late Vatican decree; and Englishmen, coming even from the most freedom-loving of all colleges at Oxford, have taken the leading share in binding the shameful chains round the thought of Christendom.

With some old Catholics, indeed, there was always a jealous suspicion of the perfect orthodoxy of converts. Their feeling, however, was of a mean and angry nature, arising from the fact that the converts were not always their devoted personal adherents, and did not count the voice of a bishop or a priest as equivalent to the voice of the Pope or of the Universal Church. I have heard of a prelate of this kind whose anti-convert jealousy took

the form of a glaring anti-Catholic heresy. He used to say that the convert taint was not extirpated till the third generation: little recking that he was thus condemning the apostles and all the first Christians, and that he was denying the efficacy of that grace of faith which, according to Catholic doctrine, is given in its fulness to every baptised person. What he meant was clear enough. He simply disliked that independence of thought on matters not of faith which he found in converts, as a result of their liberal education; an independence most unpleasant to prelates whose mind was absorbed in the idea that the one function of bishops is to govern, and the one duty of priests and laity to obey.

It was, however, several years before I fully realised the intensity of that spirit of absolutism which governs the action of the Roman episcopate in general, which is itself prostrate in abject submission to the Papacy, acting through its immediate instruments at Rome. I call it the Papacy, and yet, after all, it is not so much the individual Pope who governs the Church according to his own personal will, as the officials by whom he is surrounded, and who issue decrees in his name. It is what is termed the Roman Court, or the Curia, which has its feet upon the necks of bishops, priests, and laity, and whose reckless absolutism generates that same tyrannical *animus* which is the governing spirit of the

bishops in general. It was not long, it is true, before I felt that a certain *esprit de corps* existed through the priesthood, which kept them apart from the laity, as a body, having distinct interests of their own, and agreeing, however much they otherwise disagreed, in keeping secret all facts which might bring discredit on their order. And to the last, and in the case of the very best of the priests, I never felt sure that they were thoroughly open in all things, and that they had nothing which they did not keep back from the eyes of the world.

It was between four and five years after I had entered the Roman Church that the first doubt as to the validity of her claims ever entered my mind; and then it was for a long time rather a puzzle than a recognised doubt. So thorough was my trust and my satisfaction, that the new thought was for years nothing but a haunting suspicion of the existence of some sort of intellectual problem, the solution of which must be really accessible, if only I could find my way to it. I have already said that the prelate who received me into the Romish Church, assumed that I was fully instructed in all its doctrines, and that, with one exception, that assumption was correct. Nevertheless, that exception lay at the root of my whole belief. It was between four and five years afterwards that one of the most distinguished of Catholic theologians, writing to me in approval of certain

papers that I had published, added that on one point I had made a mis-statement, for that I had implied that the certainty with which a Catholic holds the doctrines of the Church is a moral certainty, and not an absolute certainty. The Catholic doctrine, he stated, is to the effect that all possibility of doubt as to anything that the Church has decreed is absolutely excluded. The idea of probability, even in its highest degree, did not enter, he said, into the Catholic belief.

I, on the other hand, had treated Catholic certainty as to detailed doctrines as resting upon a basis of historical information, which, from the nature of things, could not possibly be more than probably correct. The truth of Christianity itself I regarded as an historical certainty, but only in the same manner as all historical questions are certain; depending, that is, upon documentary evidence, which never could rise to the certainty of abstract mathematical truth. The probability of its truth might, indeed, come very near to absolute certainty; but at the very utmost its nature must be historical, that is, moral. The infallibility of the Church in which I believed was thus exactly measured by the degree of certainty of proof on which the historical truth of Christianity rested. It was a highly probable infallibility; just as I believed that the truth of Christianity and of the Biblical records was in the highest degree probable. The

truth of the New Testament I knew, like every other reasonable person, was a thing to be proved by evidence; and no conclusion drawn from the words of the New Testament could possibly be more certain than the proof on which the New Testament itself rested.

That Catholic theologians could ever have held any other view than this had never even occurred to my mind. I always looked upon any other theory of inspiration and infallibility as too monstrous to be attributed to thinking persons. Rather, I never contemplated the existence of any other theory as a possibility at all. It had never entered into my mind to ask whether the Roman Church did or did not hold any other view. I should as soon have thought that astronomers held that the conclusions of astronomy are more certain than the accuracy of the telescopic observations on which they depended. I believed that every Catholic held that the infallibility of the Church was just as certain as the truth of Christianity and the Bible itself. That it could be more certain than is our historical knowledge of the words of Jesus, was a conception which it had never entered my mind to entertain.

When, then, I learnt that the Catholic doctrine was, as it seemed to me, a logical monstrosity, for a time I was simply bewildered. I thought that possibly my theological critic might be mistaken, and that he was

overstating the authoritative teaching of the Church. I took the view in, so to say, and let it lodge in my mind, only every now and then becoming painfully conscious that here was a problem that I had not solved, but which must be solved some day. At the same time it unquestionably taught me to be more free in thinking that there are questions in Catholicism which Catholic theologians were apt to shirk, instead of attempting to solve. One thing only remained fixed in my mind, namely, that the laws of reasoning are immutable, and that faith in God cannot possibly be upheld by a violation of the elementary laws of all knowledge and belief.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I WAS at one time surprised at finding how little this logical difficulty is felt, or even known, by the vast majority even of educated Roman Catholics. But I have since learnt not to be surprised either at this or any other flaws in the reasonings which vitiate the religious opinions of nearly all men and women of all creeds. Strange as it may seem, there is no other subject in the world in which persons are more careless as to the correctness of the basis of their opinions than they are in their religious views. The transcendent importance of the subject, which might have seemed a special ground for caution and accuracy, appears to have precisely the opposite result. People consider that this importance is a reason for making up their minds hastily, and for allowing their emotions to overpower their judgment, rather than for patient thoughtfulness and a careful examination of each stage in the syllogisms through which they come to their final conclusions. It is easy, no doubt, to condemn Roman Catholics for that violation of the laws of right reason through which they uphold a belief in absolute church infallibility, on grounds which, by the nature of the case, cannot be otherwise

than probable. But now that I have seen more of the world and its strangely illogical constitution, I cease to wonder at the inconclusive arguments, or rather rhetoric, of Protestants and Catholics alike; and my most steady indignation and opposition are now directed against those religious views which not merely happen to be the most unreasonable, but which are also the most practically mischievous.

Some time after the difficulty that I have been describing had thoroughly lodged itself in my own mind, I was talking one evening with one of the most influential superiors of one of the most influential religious orders in the Romish Church, and I mentioned the subject to him quite freely.

'Well now, Father Anselm,' I said to him, 'how do you get over this puzzle? Here is everybody teaching and believing that the conclusion of a syllogism is more certain than the premises.'

'I don't quite see what you mean,' he said. 'I certainly believe that everything that the Catholic faith implies is not contrary to reason; it may be above reason, but it is impossible that it should be contrary to it.'

'That is not what I mean,' I rejoined; 'our knowledge of the truth of Christianity is only probable knowledge. I grant you that it is practically certain, as an historical truth; but it is of the nature of probable certainty.'

'Certainly that is the fact,' he replied, 'but what then?'

'And you hold that our belief in the word of God given us through the Catholic Church is infallible,' I continued; 'is as certain as our knowledge that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.'

'It would be heresy to doubt it,' said Father Anselm.

'But how in the world can the one belief be built upon the other belief?' I asked.

He looked not a little taken aback, so I assured him that I was not putting quibbles to him, but that I wanted most seriously to get over a difficulty which I could not solve. He continued to look bewildered, but being a very single-minded man, he made no attempt to throw dust in my eyes by any sham solution or verbal trickery, and after a little more talk I was called away.

A few days afterwards I met Father Anselm at another party, and in the course of the evening he came up to me and said quietly:

'Do you know, I 've been thinking a great deal about what you said the other night.'

I was sincerely glad to hear it, and asked him what conclusion he had come to.

'Why,' he answered, 'I 've been looking over all the books I could think of, and I can find no solution of the difficulty at all. Nobody seems to recognise it.'

And then, to my astonishment, he asked me seriously how I got over it myself.

'I can't see any way out of it, I assure you,' I answered, 'unless you are satisfied that the possession of the gift of Divine faith makes up for the flaw in the reasoning.'

He looked by no means convinced that the problem could be thus solved, and I did not pretend that it satisfied myself, for how is a man to know that he has this gift of faith, and whether the gift of faith is not an illusion, except by the conclusions of his own fallible reason? So that infallibility is made to rest upon fallibility after all. I never had another opportunity of further discussing the question with Father Anselm. But I suspect that, like so many more religious men, both Catholic and Protestant, he smothered the difficulty, and the barb which it carried, in a heap of pious thoughts, and satisfied himself that it would all come right in the end.

It requires, indeed, but very slight observation to learn how little the most unanswerable problems trouble the religious satisfaction of really thinking men and women, both on the Catholic and the Protestant side. Each side, too, is open to its own full measure of blame; because the Catholic boasts of the possession of a perfectly complete and self-consistent body of doctrine, while the Protestant glories in the use of his private judgment, enlightened by the vivifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

To take, for instance, a case of what would be called incredible ignorance on the part of a Roman theologian, we have but to turn over the pages of a book called 'Mornings with the Jesuits in Rome,' published nearly thirty years ago, by an English clergyman, the Rev. H. S——. In that book Mr S—— stated that he had had several conversations with some of the most distinguished Roman Jesuits, and that on one occasion he had puzzled them by asserting that the Roman Church did not declare herself infallible, and had defied them to point out any decree by which the claim was authoritatively made. On his next conversation with them, according to Mr S——, they, or one of them, confessed that in the decrees of the Council of Trent there is no distinctly defined assertion that the Church is infallible. Of course very few of Mr S——'s readers believed that in this particular story he was keeping strictly within the bounds of truth. People said that it was impossible to believe either that the Romish Church did not claim to be infallible, or that any Jesuit should allow himself to be made ridiculous in this manner by such a controversialist as this English ecclesiastic.

Now it happened that when the Pope was driven out of Rome by the revolutionists, and the Roman Jesuits of course were turned out at the same time, a great many of the latter, including nearly all their ablest men, came

straightway to England, and in London I myself made the acquaintance of several of them. Among the rest was Father Mazio, one of the two who had held the chief conversations with Mr S——. There is no reason why I should describe him under a feigned name, as, if I remember right, his name was given by Mr S——. He has also now been dead many years, and I have nothing to say of him but what is good. I became somewhat intimately acquainted with him, and thought him one of the most just minded men whom I ever knew. He was, of course, a thorough Jesuit, but in him the painful self-repression which is so common with members of the Society was transformed into a cheerful and pleasant repose of manner, with a good deal of openness and friendliness of disposition. One day we were talking about this book of Mr S——, and I said to him, 'Do you really mean that what Mr S—— says in this particular story is true?'

'I don't mean that it's all true,' he answered, 'but it's quite certain that he took us quite in. We thought him an Anglican clergyman with sincere Catholic inclinations, who honestly wanted information about Catholic doctrines; and had not the remotest notion that he was only getting up conversations for a book.'

'Then,' I said, 'it is the fact that you were taken by

surprise when he asserted that the Church nowhere authoritatively defines her infallibility.'

'It's quite true,' Father Mazio answered; 'of course it's implied throughout in the decrees of Trent; but in the sense Mr S—— meant it, it is not defined.'

'And you had never thought of this before?' I asked.

'It had never occurred to me,' he said. 'I looked through the decrees of Trent again, to see if I could possibly have been mistaken; but the man was right enough. And of course he had a great triumph over us.'

'He certainly made his English readers stare,' I said.

'Of course,' he answered, 'to us the fact that the doctrine is not written in so many words in the decrees of Trent is nothing at all. The living Church always has asserted the doctrine, whether it has been defined or not.'

And undoubtedly to Father Mazio and to Roman Catholics in general the fact was of no importance, religiously speaking. But I refer to the anecdote itself, as showing how little prepared are accomplished Roman theologians for controversies, when assailed from a new and unexpected quarter.

When I came myself to be practically disturbed by the difficulties which forced themselves into my mind, I felt this defect in the priesthood very keenly. The course I

adopted was that which I still think justifiable and prudent. I published at times thoughts and views upon Catholic affairs which I knew began at last to make people wonder 'what I should say next.' But in private I never uttered a word to any living person, whether priest or layman, until the very last, which might tend to disturb his faith, without tending in the least to give a thorough solution to the difficulties under which I laboured. The conversations I had with Father Anselm, in which I put my problem almost as if I were speaking out of mere curiosity, showed me, considering who and what he was, that he could find no more solution from books than I could find. And I did not think it justifiable, considering what is the universal Roman doctrine concerning Divine faith, to introduce questions which would be morally certain to shatter a good man's personal trust in God and his hopes of heaven, without introducing any other creed and hopes instead. I knew well that the inner personal histories of sincere men differ almost as much as their limbs and their features, and that as I could not reproduce my own history and my own knowledge of all the controverted questions in the minds of those whose whole religious experience had been bound up with the faith and practices of Rome, I had much better leave their peace undisturbed.

I may mention a case of this kind in connection with

a conversation which I once had with an intelligent and zealous member of a foreign religious order living and working in England. I knew him and liked him; and in reference to something he had said I asked whether he was ever puzzled by the questions that people put to him.

'I was never really puzzled but once,' he said. 'A lady asked me, after confession, whether the body of Christ, which He held in his hand at the Last Supper, and of which He said, "This is my body," was his natural or his glorified body. I did not know what to say, and I should not know what to say now.'

At this time I was beginning to be painfully conscious of those metaphysical, or ontological, difficulties respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation which ultimately convinced me of its impossibility; and it may be thought that I should have seized such an opportunity for showing this Italian Father that the difficulty which the lady in question had stated to him did in fact destroy the doctrine of transubstantiation altogether. For how could Christ have His body in His own hand on either of the supposed alternatives? By the supposition, His body was still in its natural state, and was incapable of becoming two bodies at the same time. And the impossibility was as complete, even if the piece of bread that He held in His hand was a 'glorified' body. Even

supposing that the 'glorified' body possessed all the properties which the doctrine of transubstantiation attributes to it, it is plainly impossible that the natural body should be existing unchanged, while at the same time it was miraculously transformed. Most Catholics, if the difficulty were pointed out to them, would repudiate it as a temptation to their faith and the suggestion of the devil. But here was a zealous priest, who had no doubts whatever as to the validity of the Roman claims, who nevertheless could not help seeing that the difficulty did exist. What was I to do? Whether he thought I should be able to help him out of the bewilderment by suggesting some highly ingenious theory of my own, I cannot tell. As I could do nothing of the kind, ought I not at once to have pointed out to him the destructive power of this lady's question, and asked him whether it did not really lead to a denial of the infallibility of Rome, inasmuch as no teacher can be infallible who teaches that which is impossible?

I did nothing of the kind, because I was satisfied that whatever might be the issue of my own reconsideration of the Roman claims, in this priest's case it would in all probability lead to the utter ruin of his religious life. Men who have been thus brought up in the Roman Church, and who afterwards find the foundations of their old faith undermined, usually come to disbelieve in God

altogether, or plunge into a course which is equivalent to a rejection of all belief in any connection between this present life and that which begins after death. Those who think that Rome is the embodiment of every lie and crime would, of course, hold that at all costs and in all seasons every Roman Catholic should be brought to disbelieve her creed. As I think differently, it appears to me that I was justified in abstaining from all that mere disturbance of religious faith which must almost inevitably issue in the shattering of the soul's dearest hopes, and of its obedience to God, according to its light.

Nor is this idea inconsistent with the conviction that the whole Roman system is a gigantic illusion and a terrible tyranny, fastened round the necks of its servants. The mingling of errors and truths, of ignorance and knowledge, is one of the most inexplicable of the mysteries, as it is one of the most undeniable of the facts, in this strange world through which we are struggling to our last end. Nor must men be judged by the logical tendencies of their defined opinions. Few men, and still fewer women, are careful reasoners. They live by tradition and by emotion; and many of them have the precious gift of extracting every grain of truth that may lie hid in the midst of a bundle of error, and of gathering sweetness from the most worthless of flowers. Neither Rome, therefore, nor England, is to be judged by

the actual truth or error of its detailed doctrines. Each must be judged by its practical tendencies; and for myself, while I have had every experience that the Roman system is both practically and theoretically an irresistible despotism, upholding a theory which is logically and philosophically impossible, by the ruthless repression of all individual thought and a bitter aversion to all real culture, I know, equally well by experience, that Rome counts among her clergy and laity many admirable minds. Deep as would be my rejoicing to see her everywhere supplanted by an organisation at once Christian and free, I cannot bring myself to believe that the surest way to bring about the establishment of such an organisation would be to attempt the destruction of the personal faith of each individual Roman Catholic into whose mind I might be able privately to insinuate my doubts.

Such a mode of viewing the great controversy, tolerant in the extreme as it may appear to many Protestants, is, I know, regarded by every Catholic with unmixed condemnation. Rome demands all or none. She holds that it is impossible for a man seriously to question her claims to speak as the Voice of God, without in reality at once repudiating those claims, and affronting the Holy Spirit which bestows the gift of faith. Some very rigidly consistent theologians would, I daresay, assert

that I never was a Catholic at all, and that my entrance and continuance in the Church was a mistake from beginning to end. At any rate they would all allege that from the time when I first began to ask myself whether the authority of Rome was usurped or not, I had excommunicated myself. The more rigorous judges would, indeed, be the more charitable, because they would impute less, or even no moral blame to me, because I first of all entered the Church through a mistake; while the others would hold that I had tampered with the grace given to me, and had thus made myself guilty of moral sin. However this may be, I admit that while it was altogether a momentous and grievous mistake, submission to Rome has given me an insight into the inner life of the Roman community, which it would be quite impossible to gain from outside its borders.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT the same time, as soon as I had even partially realised the fact that the faith in her teaching which Rome required, was equivalent to an admission that the conclusion of a syllogism can be more certain than its premises, the whole internal working of her system presented itself to me under a new aspect. Catholics, it should be remembered, rarely permit themselves in any searching criticisms of the ways of the priesthood, unless in cases where its conduct is flagrantly in violation of its professions—I am speaking, of course, of devout and zealous Catholics, and not of those mere hereditary Catholics who openly avow themselves irreligious, or who maintain a decent regard for their creed, because they think that a gentleman ought not to change his religion. There are many of this last class, both in England and elsewhere, whose private criticisms of the proceedings of popes, bishops, and priests, would amaze the world, if only they could be set forth in print. Converts, naturally, are usually of the zealous class, and their censures upon the facts, which they cannot but see, are usually hesitating and timid, and they do not venture upon any such

inquiries as may touch the universal working of the Church itself.

When, however, I came to suspect that the first demand which Rome made upon my understanding was equivalent to a demand for the surrender of my reasoning faculties, I began to open my eyes, and to ask whether there were not certain defects in her practical life which were wholly inconsistent with her claims to be regarded as the exclusive habitation of the Divine Spirit. As her claims to be guided by the Vicar of Jesus Christ were far wider and deeper than any which the Anglican Church put forth, so she was to be judged by a far more rigorous test, and her failures would be more irresistibly conclusive against those claims.

One of the first practical matters in which I began to be satisfied that there was something wrong in her inner life was her administration of the Sacrament of Penance, or, as Protestants generally call it, of Confession. Of the popular ideas as to the abuses of the Confessional I personally know nothing. That they do exist to some small extent in this country I am confident, but only to a small extent. I have heard of objectionable questions being asked in confession; and that they are sometimes asked, with good intentions, by indiscreet priests, cannot be doubted. Of the generally 'respectable' character of the English priests I am satisfied; although their system

of keeping secret all their affairs, in order that the laity may not be 'disedified,' always created in me a certain suspicion that things might not be as 'respectable' as they seemed. Of the mischief produced by this system of concealment the Roman clergy are not in the least aware. Yet how it operates to their disadvantage may be judged from the popular Protestant hostility to the Jesuits, who, being the most exclusive society in the world, are credited with more villanies than any others. Yet, in this matter of propriety, my own conviction is that the Jesuits generally are almost absolutely blameless.

There were three chief details in which, when I began to reflect freely, the Roman method of translating her doctrine, as to confession, into actual life, appeared to indicate defects inconsistent with her own hearty belief in her Divine guidance. I should perhaps first remind the reader that according to the Roman creed, confession with the absolution which follows it, is applicable to what are termed mortal sins alone. Mortal, or deadly, sins are those which, it is held, exclude a man absolutely from the favour of God, because they have been forbidden by Him under the express penalty of eternal death. Whosoever knowingly, and with a well-formed intention, commits one of these sins, thereby excommunicates himself, and is an outcast from the Divine favour, quenching the light of the Spirit in his soul. These are the sins

which are held to be forgiven, by Christ's ordinance, when the sinner confesses them to the priest, with full penitence of heart, and is absolved in the name of Christ, with the intention of fulfilling the penance which the absolving priest enjoins.

Now granting that Christ has set up a Church in which He is ever present, and that there does exist any such a definite description of sins which He has defined as mortal, there is nothing very unreasonable in this doctrine. Every organised body must have the right of excluding its members on their infraction of its rules, and of re-admitting them on certain terms. The fatal fallacy of the Roman theory is this, that no such definite collection of sins, classing some as mortal and others as venial, can possibly be drawn up. The definitions of the Roman moral theologians are for the most part purely arbitrary and fictitious, and the most vehement controversies have arisen among them as to what sins are mortal and what are venial. They habitually start with definitions which are nothing better than fictitious; and, in fact, had it not been for the practice of allowing the Pope to settle all questions by his *ipse dixit*, the whole body of Roman casuistry would long ago have fallen utterly to pieces.

Now, in reality, what is the practice of the Roman Church? According to the rule of the Church, confes-

sion is only exacted once a year, in the Lent and Easter season. This rule is founded on the common-sense conviction that it is absurd to suppose that ordinarily religious persons will actually be often guilty of such enormities as will shut them out from the Divine favour, and consign them to eternal torments. As a fact, this annual confession is thought sufficient by a large number of persons who take their religious duties very easily, and regard absolution as a necessary yearly ceremony. But with the whole multitude of devout persons, chiefly women, there has grown up a practice of receiving communion every week, and even oftener, with some even daily; and all such devotees are encouraged to come to confession and to receive absolution weekly, or at least fortnightly, although they can have nothing but 'venial' sins, and those of the slightest kind, to confess. By the Roman doctrine, these venial sins are constantly forgiven as they are constantly repented of, by the application of the atoning blood of Christ; while the application of His blood is withheld from those guilty of mortal sin, until they confess and are absolved.*

The result is, that absolution is incessantly given for

* It is not denied that persons guilty of mortal sin, who by no possibility can have access to a priest, will be forgiven on their true repentance, if they have a full intention of obtaining absolution as soon as possible.

sins with which, according to the Roman doctrine, it has nothing to do, and a most extravagant value is attached to incessant priestly aid, for which the Roman creed gives no warrant, the confession and the subsequent absolution being both alike hollow and unreal And in the second place, a wholly unhealthy and artificial state of mind is generated, with a view to actually manufacturing some sort of sinfulness to be attached to the most harmless acts, which not even the wildest self-condemnation can imagine to be mortal in their guilt. The poor, scrupulous soul torments itself by the application of the most fantastic tests, in order to 'keep its conscience clear,' and to find something to say to its confessor when the regular hour for confession comes round.

Another evil that naturally follows from this pernicious self-worrying is the gradual formation of an utterly diseased tone of spiritual feeling. These anxiously pious people find sins everywhere, and cultivate that abominable practice of judging of their spiritual state by the excitability of their emotions, and their consciousness of the warmth of their love to God, to say nothing of their forced affections towards Mary and the saints. There is a well-known saying among priests which exactly expresses the effects of this morbid self-searching. It is said that a man would rather be confessor to a regiment

of dragoons than to a convent of nuns. And who would not enter into the feeling? The sins of dragoons may be gross, and easily confessed; but what eye can comprehend the complexities of a self-torturing nun's soul, and what voice can administer effective consolation to a mind that is resolved never to be at peace? I do not mean to say that the satire applies to all nuns; certainly it does not apply to the more worldly or easy-going among them. And I have no doubt that there are many among those who are most fervent, who yet have as much good sense as those outside the convent walls, especially among those who belong to the active orders. But the saying is a not unfair way of satirising the morbid effects of the system of confession which prevails among the more devout Catholics of all classes, especially those who are not braced by the invigorating atmosphere to be breathed by an occasional intimate mingling with Protestant society.

It was the observation of the universal prevalence of this general perversion of the real doctrine of Rome in the matter of confession, which, as much as any other detail of administration, contributed to confirm me in my suspicions as to the thorough hollowness of her administrative system. Considering the elementary position which the practice of confession holds in her cultivation of the spiritual life, this utter perversion of

its professed principles at length convinced me that the guiding spirit of Romanism was not one whit more unworldly or untemporising and self-consistent than that of Anglicanism. I am far from saying that this imposition upon the simple obedience of the laity is a deliberate imposture practised by the priesthood for their own benefit, materially as it tends to increase their professional influence, and to foster that pernicious system of 'direction,' by which many of the priests, especially those of great spiritual pretensions and popularity, keep so many good, honest minds in a condition of abject slavery. It is the system which is at fault; the system which is fostered at Rome itself, and by that strange collection of mock biographies, called 'Saints' Lives,' which are in truth more than half fictitious, and which are as mischievous in their moral effects as they are historically worthless. Let no one imagine that the tyrannical personage, who in Protestant and secular society goes by the name of Mrs Grundy, exercises no sway in the Roman Church. She is at least as despotic in the regions where the Pope is supposed to be omnipotent as elsewhere. And it is to her terrifying rule that the continuance of many of the worst of Roman Catholic abuses, especially those which put on the garb of extreme sanctity and devotion to Rome, remain untouched. If any writer, even in the most modest way, were to publish a

censure upon these prevalent abuses of the Confessional, he would instantly be denounced at Rome, and his publication would be put upon the *Index Expurgatorius.*

The astounding speed with which confessions are heard and absolutions given in popular districts was another proof to me of the reckless spirit in which the mere forms of the Catholic ceremonial are hurried through in a country like England, which is free from the abominable irreverences of countries where the priesthood and episcopate have it all their own way.

'I assure you, Mr Seymour,' said a hardworking London priest to me one day, as he came into a room where I was sitting, fagged out, and threw himself into a chair, 'it's only by getting up and walking forwards to open the door every time a fresh person comes in, that I can hold up at all and keep my breath in my body.'

'How many hours have you been hearing confessions this evening?' I asked him.

'About four,' he said, 'and I've not done yet. We shall not have done till near midnight, and it's the same every Easter. And my only chance of holding up is to have my seat as far away as possible from the door, and so get a few steps of exercise, and a little rest for my lungs while I'm letting one out and another in.'

'Why,' I said, 'I should have thought your lungs rested while each penitent told his story.'

'That shows you are not a priest, and never had a mission abounding in Irish.'

I did not venture to ask more, but I have often heard hints as to the surgical nature of the operation necessary to extract anything in the nature of a real confession from the large majority of the poor Irish. But whether with the Irish or the English, the rapidity with which these confessions are got through at the great festivals is almost incredible. The numbers make anything like a serious confession and instruction impossible; and the whole is got through at racing speed. They say this cannot be helped. But what must be the depth of the conviction of the nature and value of confession where such practices are tolerated, under any pretence whatever, and what must be the hardening of the conscience, when the sacrament which is professedly designed for its cleansing is turned into a flagrant caricature?

Considering, further, the practical working of such a method of enforcing confession, I was soon struck with the fact that the restitution of articles dishonestly taken by poor Catholics, especially servants, was a thing hardly ever heard of. Such restitution being held to be essential to the obtaining of absolution for acts of dishonesty, wherever it is possible, it speedily became clear to me, either that the servants and others who, as a class, were notoriously loose in their ideas of peculation, made

the most false confessions to their priests, or that their priests entertained very lax ideas as to the duty of restitution on the part of their so-called 'penitents.' On the whole, I suspect that both of these causes were at work, aided by that demoralising habit of defining sins of dishonesty as mortal or venial, according to the amount of money or other articles actually stolen. Dishonesty, in those classes which are not accessible to those motives of honour which often keep ladies and gentlemen honest in the absence of higher motives, is materially fostered by the teaching of Catholic moral theologians, who openly tell their people that this or that small theft or depredation is not a mortal sin, and, by a too plausible reasoning, easily forgiven. Whether or not it is so according to the Roman hypothesis, which recognises the existence of the two catalogues of enormities, it is evident to every unprejudiced critic who knows what human nature is, that every one whose spiritual aims are not very high will always give himself the benefit of the doubt; and that this pernicious practice is habitually fostered by the caricatures of confession and the hasty absolution which prevail wherever the Roman Catholic poor abound in this country.

As soon, then, as I ventured to look at this state of affairs without the awe-struck timidity of a convert or of a female devotee, or of a priest bound at all risks to

abstain from using his intelligence in noting abuses which he dare not attack, I began to perceive that the difference between the faults of Rome and England was merely nominal. For in neither the one nor the other was there any attempt to realise the high ideal which I had taught myself was to be found in the Church of Jesus Christ, such as I conceived that I saw in the Bible. In the Roman Church there was uniformity, indeed, but it was often a uniformity in faultiness; while there was not a particle of that freedom in exposing dominant corruptions, which is at least allowed us in the disunited Church of England. I saw that the spirit which is dominant in Rome, and which alone guides the action of its bishops, from the Pope downwards, is directly contradictory to the teaching of St Paul. According to the great apostle, charity is a nobler virtue than faith; according to the whole rule of Rome, charity is a virtue which is never to be practised towards those upon whom lies the faintest suspicion of heresy. The greatest virtues of Protestants are habitually sneered at as hypocritical or worldly, while the sudden conversion of the worst of livers, provided he can go through the form of a death-bed confession, absolution, and reception into the Roman Church, is hailed as the certain preparation of a soul for heaven.

CHAPTER XX.

IN no detail, however, of the inner life of Rome did it betray its inherent weakness and the hollowness of its pretension so much as in its practical carrying out of the theory of indulgences. The ordinary Protestant idea of these indulgences, as being licences to commit sin, given and paid for beforehand, is fictitious. At least, I never came across anything of the kind, and it would be repudiated by all respectable priests, as being unwarranted by the doctrine of the Church, and as an outrageous insult on all true religion. The quotations of any such published licences which Protestant writers sometimes bring forward are either palpable misconceptions of Roman theological language, or they evidently require some sort of confirmation which is not vouchsafed us. That any such indulgences are ever sold in this country I do not for a moment believe.

Protestant writers, even those tolerably well-informed, do not always know what is the real Roman doctrine on indulgences. According to the Council of Trent, all sins, though their eternal punishment is forgiven through the

merits of Jesus Christ, are subject to a temporal punishment, such as David is said to have suffered for his murder of Uriah, though the Lord had 'put away his sin.' And by the word 'temporal' Rome simply means that which is not eternal, whether it lasts beyond the grave or no. An indulgence, then, is a remission of some portion, or of the whole, of this temporal suffering, whether it is to be endured on earth or in purgatory, where the completion of the temporal punishment of sin is held to be accomplished.

The claim to a power to make this remission is perhaps the most daring that is put forward by the Pope. He claims it by virtue of his being in the fullest sense the earthly vicar of Jesus Christ, and His representative in the administration of the inner and spiritual life, as well as of the outer affairs of His temporal kingdom. Purgatory is held to be a portion of this temporal kingdom; and consequently the Pope's jurisdiction is held to extend into purgatory, as well as over all the nations of the earth. The Pope, therefore, can give indulgences, which remit such temporal punishment due to forgiven sins as would last one hundred days, or a year, or any given period, or such as would be 'plenary;' that is, such as will remit the whole amount of temporal punishment that may be due.

But when one comes to examine into the groundwork

and detailed working of this astounding doctrine, either in books, or in conversation with living ecclesiastics, the whole theory and practice are found to be involved in a cloud of mystery. Whatever it may be with the Pope and in the atmosphere that surrounds him, with many of the English, and I suspect with the French and German priesthood, it is a sore subject altogether. They have always this fact to start with, that sin does often entail grievous bodily and spiritual losses, however sincerely it may be repented of; and they appeal to the undoubted practice of the early Church when spiritual disabilities were inflicted by the Church authorities for flagrant offences, which punishments could of course be remitted by the authorities that inflicted them, such remission, as they say, having developed into the modern 'indulgence.' But beyond this, the whole question is shrouded in a maze. I never met with any man who could give a definite explanation of the dogmas involved, or could attempt a justification of the reckless wildness with which these indulgences are scattered broadcast on every side. The working of the system is nothing less than ludicrous. I call it ludicrous, rather than tragic, because I suspect that its practical effect in England is slight.

To say that indulgences can be had easily, that is, in return for the performance of easy duties, is to use most inadequate language. The spiritual atmosphere of Rome

swarms with indulgences. Indulgences, even including those called plenary, may be gained in hundreds and thousands in return for the most trifling prayers and acts; and the Pope gives them, as it were in handfuls, to everybody who asks for them. They are attached in profusion to rosaries, relics, crucifixes, prayers, churches, devout ascetic acts, and every possible work which Rome wishes to show that it approves. In the course of a day, or a few hours, one may gain indulgences enough to remit the punishments of sins that would last tens of thousands of years, and plenary indulgences one over another till one is weary of counting them. The excuse that is made for this profusion makes the matter worse instead of better. It is said that as nobody can ever say for certain that he was in so pious a state of mind as to have gained any specified indulgence, he had better go on trying again and again, so as to make sure at last. What must be the idea of the spiritual sincerity of devout Catholics which prevails in high quarters, which can thus degrade the attempt to obtain a diminution of Divine chastisement to a kind of game of chance? It is as if one stood in front of a wall in which was an extremely small hole, through which one was bound to throw an equally small ball, the difficulty being almost insuperable, and only to be accomplished by incessant daily throwings, so that at last by some happy chance

the ball might hit the mark, with a result which, after all, nobody could exactly describe. If this, I began to say to myself, is the fashion in which the vicegerent of Jesus Christ administers the laws of his kingdom, how utterly hollow must that administration be! What can be the convictions of a Pontiff who thus trifles with the most awful interests, and tosses about relaxations of the judgments of God as if they were the toys to be won in a game played by schoolboys?

And yet the present Pope and other Popes, and the bishops whom he authorises to dispense the 'treasure' of indulgence still farther and farther still, are perfectly serious in thinking that the practice is not profane and absurd, and that, in some way or other, both the living and the dead are really the better for it. It is all the result of that deadening refusal to use the critical faculty which blinds the Pope, and all prelates under him, to the nature of the acts which they sanction; which, for instance, permitted the present Pope to go on allowing French and English devotees to believe in the alleged miracle of La Salette, while he himself believed it to be either an illusion or an imposture. And thus it is that they go on from age to age, multiplying these sham remissions of sin, in spite of the decree passed in the last session of the Council of Trent, which specially orders that indulgences shall be sparingly granted, '*ne*

nimiâ facilitate Ecclesiastica Disciplina enervetur.' Nevertheless, short of selling indulgences, everything is now done to use them for the destruction of ecclesiastical discipline. I have said that I believe them to be rather absurd than mischievous in this country; but what they are in Spain, or Portugal, or Italy, or in South America, or among the Catholic communities in the East, I cannot tell. They may be no more pernicious than in England, and they may be very much the reverse.

Even here, as it was at last forced upon my mind, they are a token of something fatal to the pretensions of Rome to be the affectionate, faithful, and intelligent vicar of Christ. I had left the English Church because she appeared to me to fail in fulfilling the conditions which I thought must be characteristic of every branch of the true Church, all her faults culminating in the absence of any infallible power for interpreting the original revelation of Christ. Her failings and, above all, her endless dissensions, were the natural consequence of her human origin, and of the absence of Christ himself from her government. Now, in the Roman Church, I was beginning to see that her claim to infallibility was of a nature to destroy the validity of human reason as a guide to belief and conduct; and that her internal administration was exactly such as was to be looked for from a Church whose pretensions were thus suicidal. Gradually

as it came upon me, the shock was of terrific force. Is it to be conceived, I cried out to myself in my misery, that all my expectations of finding a trustworthy guide are no better than a dream? If Christianity is a Divine revelation, is it possible that there exists no means whatever for knowing with even moral certainty what Christianity is? Have I been right in holding that a revelation implies the existence of some infallible explanation of its doctrines? Or are we driven back helplessly upon the obscurities of the Bible, to find our way through them as best we may? Has Rome no more real pretence to be an infallible guide than those Protestant sects which profess that each converted soul is taught infallibly by the Holy Spirit through whose operation it has been regenerated? What could I do? To whom could I apply, when I saw that every one was absolutely committed to those fundamental untruths on which the whole Roman creed rested, and when I knew that they would simply condemn me as having thrown away my faith? I could only cry to God Himself in my silent sorrow, and wait, and wait on, in that confidence in Him which never left me, even in my darkest hours of doubt and gloom.

All these misgivings, too, strengthened and took the clearest shapes, while I was rarely in contact with any of those common and commonplace abuses which may always be urged against the Roman Church, with no

little force, and which weigh with many minds, even to driving them away from its communion, but which had no effect upon me, either argumentatively, or as moving the reason through the imagination. It was my lot, at all times, from the period at which I was received into the Roman Church, to be associated with the better examples of the type of character which it forms, as it has always been my lot to know the better examples of Anglicanism. Of course there have been exceptions in both cases; but of what are popularly called the scandals in both Churches I have personally known but little.

Especially this is the case with those religious orders which are regarded by Protestants as concentrating in themselves all the characteristic vices of Rome. What are the monks, the friars, the Jesuits, the nuns of southern and purely Catholic countries, I do not know. That the conventual abuses in these foreign countries are at times serious, I am confident, though they are not as bad as Protestants think. But I may mention one fact, which is so well known that there is no need for concealing it, or for disguising it, and which tells powerfully in favour of the Catholicism of the North. When the reformation of the prisons in Rome was undertaken, with the Pope's sanction, some years ago, the work was solely due to the energies of a priest, who was an Englishman and a convert, and he was com-

pelled to come to England and Belgium to find nuns who would be willing to devote themselves to a course of toil so distasteful to Italian laziness; and when after some years of success, he was forced to seek an access of numbers, he again was driven here to seek recruits from English convents.

It is the fact, also, that while the members of English religious orders have been apt to overstrain the letter of their rules in their zeal for an increased rigour of their discipline, the general reformation of the great orders, such as the Franciscans, Benedictines, and Dominicans, though for many years determined on, even to the smallest details, by the Roman authorities, had been found wholly impracticable, owing to the steady resistance of their foreign members at the time I ceased to own allegiance to the Pope. Whether the Roman reforming authorities have now dared to do their duty, and to show themselves in earnest, I do not know. Certainly it was my knowledge of the inability or unwillingness of Rome to enforce the reforms whose necessity was long ago admitted by itself, that materially aided in dissipating my belief that the Spirit of Christ was really the ruling power in the Church of Rome.

Of the English religious orders I can say nothing in detail, for the one reason that whatever I said would be capable of application to individual houses and persons.

On the whole, all my own knowledge of them, including both nuns and Jesuits, is favourable. I see, of course, and deplore that one special deficiency in their character, which is the result of that destruction of freedom of individual action which interferes with the full development of each man's nature, as God has given it to him. The healthy and perfect growth of our intelligent nature is interfered with by our being permitted to shake off the responsibilities of individualism, when once maturity is attained. This theory of obedience to superiors is like the nailing of the young branches of a growing oak to a stone wall. The branches will not be shattered by the storms of the air, but the tree will never grow to maturity, or be an oak indeed. Especially is this the case with the Jesuits, where the rigour of obedience is more severe than with any other order, and where the consequence is the creation of a monotony of character fatal to all greatness of intellect and power.

Undoubtedly this habitual subordination of the individual to the superior in all the orders is less injurious in the case of some minds than in others; and it is compatible, saving this one point of vigorous manliness, with the attainment of real sanctity. With women, as is natural, the community life, with its obedience and modesty of dress, is less injurious than in the case of men. That convents should be especially subject to the

peculiar faults which must be expected in a houseful of unmarried women, young and old, is, of course, not to be denied. And equally, of course, nuns keep these their characteristic infirmities to themselves as far as possible. So, too, the internal administration of communities of men is subject to those pettinesses of intrigue and jealousy and despotism which are the heritage of both sexes alike. The knowledge of these defects, or even vices, as we may call them, now and then creeps out into the outer world. But I suspect that they are the chief vices of English religious communities.

Nor let it be supposed that the men and women in these houses are destitute of all sympathy with the intellectual movements of the time. The nuns whose vocation is education, are, I imagine, as hearty in their belief in its real value as a means of elevating the character of the poor as their most zealous Protestant rivals. Whether, again, as a rule, they show more sense in their ministrations to the poor and the sick than is usual among religious and benevolent Protestant ladies, I cannot say. While Protestant religious women and uninstructed clergymen are always sacrificing everything to the making of converts to their own peculiar views, Roman Catholic women and priests are habitually haunted by the dread of losing those who belong to what they consider the only true Church. I do not

think that I am far wrong when I say that I suspect that Roman Catholic benevolent people do as much real harm to the poor in their efforts for the support of what they consider faith, as is done by Protestant benevolent people in the practice of what they consider charity. Happily there are sensible persons in each of the rival creeds.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOW, too, the old process by which I had come to examine in detail the claims of the English Church was renewed in my mind in reference to the claims of Rome. The moment my early belief in the Divine origin of the Establishment was shaken, I had no longer any scruple in looking with a keen eye into her history, and in testing her pretensions by matters of fact. It was the same now with Rome. Her demand for the absolute assent of the intelligence I saw was untenable; in truth, I had never imagined that reasonable men could put forth such a demand. And now that I was waiting on, from year to year, to satisfy myself whether there was any means for escaping this logical suicide, I could not help going over the old historical ground again, and inquiring whether my understanding had not been cheating itself in assuming that the course of the history of the Christian Church had been really what it was represented by the writers in the 'Tracts for the Times,' and as it was represented in Roman Catholic treatises.

That Nicene Christianity could by no process of

development have grown into the Church of England Protestantism of the nineteenth century, I had been amply satisfied. The fundamental theories of the two religions were radically distinct. Sacerdotalism was at the root of the Church of the fourth century, a denial of sacerdotalism was at the root of the English Church system of the nineteenth. And, with the teachers of the Oxford movement, I had assumed that the religion of the Nicene period was identical with that of Christ and the Apostles. But in the course of the years that had passed since I had submitted to Rome, Biblical criticism had made many advances, even among Catholic theologians themselves; and above all, I had come face to face with the enormous historical gap which intervenes between the death of St Paul and the time when the developed patristic system appears in the full light of historic evidence. So far from being a truth which might be assumed, the assertion that the religion of the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries was the religion of St Paul, was a daring hypothesis, while it was hopeless to trace by any complete chain of evidence the stages by which the one creed had been converted into the other. Taking the four Gospels as a trustworthy account of the teaching of Christ, the creed of the fourth century was a different religion altogether. If the Gospels and Epistles were substantially true pictures,

the Papacy of to-day could by no possibility have grown out of them. It must have grown out of some elements thrust into the religion of Jesus, and those elements I came to see were thrust upon it at some period between the death of Christ himself and the calling of the Council of Nice. That modern English Protestantism was due to some other elements thrust upon mediæval Christianity, I was quite ready to admit, as I clearly saw that mediæval Christianity was a natural growth out of patristic Christianity. But between Rome as she has flourished, from the moment when church history ceases to be a guesswork in the dark, and the creed and system of Christ, there is a connection little better than that of name. I am speaking, of course, only of her doctrines and her discipline, and not of the myriads of Christ-like souls who in all ages have grown to spiritual maturity within her fold.

Then came that formidable argument which Dr Newman had put forth with fatal force in the 85th Number of the 'Tracts for the Times.' If the Scripture proof of the so-called 'Church doctrines' was defective, so also was the Scripture proof of the doctrines commonly known as orthodox. If the whole body of sacerdotal and sacramental dogma could only be proved from the Bible by trusting to allusions, incidental hints, and subtle references, which might be made susceptible of another

interpretation, so it was with such doctrines as those of the Trinity, the atonement, infant baptism, the obligation of the Lord's Day, original sin, eternal punishment, and the like. Either then, it was argued in this tract and elsewhere, we must reject both classes of doctrine, or we must accept both of them, for they both are liable to this same objection, that they are not clearly taught dogmatically in the Bible.

To men who were already predisposed to accept the sacerdotal and sacramental theory this reasoning appeared unanswerable, especially when they were beginning to see that the Roman development was the only logical conclusion to be drawn from sacerdotalism in its thoroughness. As they had always been brought up to regard the Bible as the sole referee in matters of faith, and at the same time to hold sacred the ordinary doctrines which orthodox Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, alike believe, it was a wonderful relief to learn that they had been overrating the necessity of clear Biblical proof. Fully convinced that Protestant orthodoxy had come down from the Apostolic age in an unbroken tradition, they were not disturbed at being shown that it did not exist in any fully defined shape in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels; and hence they concluded that as one body of doctrines was certainly true, though not put into a defined creed in the Bible,

there was no reason why another body of doctrines should not be true, though its Scriptural proof was faint and capable of wholly different interpretations. In the excited condition of their feelings, they did not see the fallacy of the supposed parallel.

In reality, they ought to have seen that in both cases some additional proof of the correctness of the interpretation of the Biblical documents was required. The one question which could alone decide the difficulty was altogether overlooked. The original teaching of Jesus Christ was admitted to be contained substantially in the four Gospels. Could it in the first place be assumed that the teaching of the Epistles was a fair and legitimate development of the real substance and bearing of those Gospels? For instance, in the gospel narratives of the institution of the Lord's Supper, it is evident that we have no certain knowledge of the actual words used by Jesus himself, for the two accounts vary from one another. Turning, then, to St Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, we have a third formula, different from both of those of the Evangelists. How, then, could we be satisfied that we were in possession of anything like the original words at all? Surely, by using the ordinary canons of criticism, and observing that substantially there was no difference between the three; while on the other hand, if the ultra sacramental and

Roman doctrine were adopted, we must cast aside all use of our reason, and reject that evidence of our senses which would make all knowledge whatever an absolute impossibility. It was purely a question of literary and rational criticism.

So, again, with every other doctrine which we found developed into dogmatic completeness at the Nicene period, the question was not as to the fulness of its Scripture proof, but as to the logical correctness with which it was practically developed during the period when Church history was most obscure. It proved nothing at all, to take the religious documents of two ages three hundred years apart, and to assume their substantial identity of meaning. The same test must be applied to each. If the ordinary Protestant orthodoxy could be shown to be in harmony with the substantial tendencies of the Gospels and Epistles, and not to contradict the laws of reason, which cannot be violated without violating all historical proof whatever, that orthodoxy might be true, notwithstanding the deficiencies in its verbal proof in the Gospels. The rejection, therefore, of the sacerdotal theory of Rome, because it involved a *reductio ad impossibile*, by no means involved the rejection of that Protestant orthodoxy which involved no such fatal a disproof. The deficiency of Biblical proof in the Roman doctrine might be fatal, because all

reasonable probabilities were against it; while a similar deficiency might leave Protestant doctrines untouched, because all reasonable probabilities were in their favour.

The doctrine of transubstantiation alone was fatal to the pretensions of Rome; and, indeed, it is only by remembering how unwilling we all are to be logically consistent in matters where our early teaching or our deep emotions are concerned, that I can understand how I ever came to accept it, or how it can be cherished so devoutly by multitudes of religious minds in the Roman Church. Nothing can really be more fallacious than the grounds with which it is made to wear a look of reasonableness by Roman controversialists. They argue that it does not contradict the evidence of the senses, because, according to the Roman dogma, there is no change really made in the bread and wine of which the senses take cognisance. They maintain that in every material thing there exist two elements, namely, the substance and the accidents, and that these two elements are separable by the Divine power; so that the substance of one thing may be changed, while the accidents remain. It is only the accidents, again, which are perceived by the senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and seeing. For all we know, then, that which at one moment in its substance is bread, accompanied by

all the accidents by which our senses recognise bread and wine, may be miraculously converted into the substance of flesh and blood, while the senses still recognise bread and wine alone.

Indeed, it is much more than a miracle, and totally different in its nature. By a miracle we mean some re-arrangement of the existing ultimate particles of matter, which is effected without the known material processes which effect such re-arrangements. What is the cure of a disease as ordinarily completed? It is nothing more than the healthy disposition of the atoms of the blood, and flesh, and bones, and organs of the body in the manner which is essential to its normal action. In the course of nature this cure is effected by certain medical treatments, which operate no one knows how; all that we know being that, as a matter of fact, such effects commonly follow such causes. Those who defend the reality of any miraculous report maintain that in the particular cure in question the healthy re-arrangement of the small corpuscles of matter is produced by some means which in all the history of medicine was never known to work such a cure. But not the wildest believer in marvels ever maintained that the substance of a thing could be separated from its natural accidents, and no candid thinker ever maintained that we can be absolutely certain that any material substance, apart from accidents, does

exist at all. The Romish doctrine thus assumes two ontological hypotheses, upon the truth of which it is wholly impossible that the human intelligence can ever decide. It first assumes that substance is an existing thing apart from all those elements which strike our senses; and then again that this substance is physically separable from its proper accidents, so that what the senses declare to be bread may possibly be in reality flesh and blood.

But these are metaphysical subtleties about which the world in general will not think very much. The doctrine itself is simply suicidal, because it makes the testimony of the senses worthless; whereas all our knowledge of the facts of history, including the history of Jesus, depends upon the trustworthiness of the senses. The belief which many great thinkers have accorded to this doctrine even while pointing out its own impossibility, is one of the marvels of the records of civilisation. Thomas Aquinas was surely one of the greatest of thinkers of the second rank that Europe has ever seen; yet he could write these wonderful words—

> 'Visus, gustus, tactus, in te fallitur,
> Sed auditû solo tuto creditur.'

As I read these words I marvel that such a man could have written them, and quite as much that for several years I myself did not see the utter ruin of all knowledge

which they involve. We are bidden to disbelieve the sight, the touch, and the taste, and to believe only in the hearing. It seems incredible, but so it is. Why does every rational Catholic being not ask how it is that if the taste, the touch, and the sight are worthless as evidences to physical matters of fact, the hearing is one whit more to be depended on? The disciples heard Christ say, 'This is my body.' If this meant that what He held in His hand was not purely and simply ordinary bread, how could they tell that He whom they saw was a living man, and that the whole supper was not a phantasm or a dream? If I am to believe that the consecrated wafer is not simply flour, how can I believe the reality of anything that I see, touch, taste, or smell? The trustworthiness of the senses must be taken absolutely, or life utterly ceases to be a reality. How can I believe that Christ ever existed if my sense of sight, by which I read the historical proofs of His existence, is a mockery and an illusion?

And thus at last I felt that no choice was left to me, and I could only bow my head before the inscrutable will of God which had suffered me to pass through such strange illusions. It was impossible that Roman infallibility could be tenable, because it rested only on probable and historical proofs; and it could not by any possibility be a reality, because it taught a doctrine which overthrows

the evidence of the senses altogether. Where, then, was I to go, and whither could I turn? What could I do but humble myself before the incomprehensibleness of God and be still? What profit was it to beat myself against the bars of my prison-house, and cry to God, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?' The ablest theologians in the Roman Church, to whom I applied, could give me no reply. They could not solve the difficulties; they could only try to turn my eyes aside, or confuse me with subtleties. I was alone with God, even though I felt that He was shrouding me in darkness, and forcing me to see that the infallible pretensions of Rome as the interpeter of the Gospel were vain. I could not help again looking out over the whole wilderness of human life; its myriads of past ages, its unnumbered millions now scattered over the world, in all their ignorance, their brutalism, their quarrels, and their sins, moving onwards to some better life by seemingly imperceptible degrees. I shivered as I found myself, with all my own ignorances and faults, involved in my own share in this mysterious conflict and darkness; and at times I could not help crying aloud, 'O my God! what is it? what is it? Why art Thou a hidden God? Why do I cry to Thee, and Thou hearest not?'

And thus from year to year I felt that I was alone with Him. Of course, as soon as I was satisfied that my

difficulties were unanswerable, I ceased quietly to communicate in the Roman Church; but I said nothing to those many kind hearts which would have been wrung with pain at the knowledge of what they could not but regard as a renunciation of God and Christ. Why, too, should I force difficulties into minds cast in a different mould from my own, whose religious peace would be shattered, because they would, from their training and habits, be unable to trust as absolutely as I could in the goodness, and the presence, and the sustaining hand of God, when every tie which bound them to any existing Church was rent asunder? The loneliness was intense, but even when the isolation was most absolute, I think that my sense of the reality of the Divine presence, of the certainty that I was in God's hands, that all was well for time and eternity, never was shaken for a single hour. Nor did I ever lose my feelings of kindness and tenderness to the Catholics from whom I was parting, or experience any actual dislike to much of the Catholic system of worship and its inner spiritual life. It was against the tyranny of its administration, and the terrorism with which it crushed all liberty of thought, that my reason and my devotion alike rebelled; and it is that tyranny and terrorism, with the spirit of intrigue that accompanies it, that I still abhor, and against which I will ever struggle during the few years that still remain

to me. Towards living Catholics my regards are as warm as ever. I know the devotedness of many of their priests, the sweet simplicity of many of their nuns, the self-denying sanctity of many of the men of their religious orders, and I can even regard some of their bishops as men who follow St Paul as he followed Christ. And though I know that it was only through a fearful mistake that I ever entered the Roman Communion, yet I cannot but be thankful to the good providence of God that I have thus learned many good things and some little wisdom, which I could not have learnt without this bitter experience.

CHAPTER XXII.

SO far indeed as absolute certainty went I was no worse off than reasonable Protestants in general. The fanatical believer who conceived himself personally enlightened by a Divine influence which superseded the ordinary operations of reason, may imagine himself possessed of the same infallible knowledge of the invisible world as the most undoubting Roman Catholic. Such persons do exist in vast numbers, but they are beyond the range of serious arguments. So, too, among the more sensible classes of educated Protestants, especially the clergy, there are many who imagine that they have grounds for their belief as irrefragable as those cherished by the Roman Catholic believer. Such unhesitating confidence is also common among religiously disposed children and women. They do not doubt, because they cannot reason.

But with men of mature years and of tolerably thoughtful minds there can be no doubt that their own knowledge of the truth of Christianity, of the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, and of the right interpretation of these books, is a matter for

study and criticism. They expect neither the infallible certainty of the Roman Catholic, nor the undoubting positiveness of the fanatic, in their efforts to understand what Christianity really is, and to disentangle it from the traditions of ages. To their position I was therefore simply brought down. I was led face to face with the notorious fact that it has not pleased God to grant us that clear knowledge of the doctrines or duties taught by Christ for which we naturally so eagerly long.

Yet I could not accept this fact with the same quiet, conservative coolness with which the mass of English Churchmen accept it. I could not do it, because of the terrible throes that I had undergone, because having been brought up in the belief of the existence of a logical certainty, at the most momentous period of life I had come to the conclusion that this certainty was not to be found in the Church in which I had been born, and in which I had honestly ministered, but in Rome alone; and again, because I had found that the mighty structure of Rome rested upon a logical impossibility, and that it involved beliefs which struck reason dead at the heart. Who could pass through such a fire and come out unsinged? Who could encounter such a terrific shock without feeling that the whole fabric of his belief was violently moved, and that for the future he could take nothing for granted, but must try his whole faith to

its very foundations? For this reason, if for none other, I must condemn myself for a time to an entire isolation, so far as active communion went, from every existing religious community. I was, nevertheless, neither scared, nor made utterly miserable, nor even lonely to any intolerable degree. From my youth my desire for religious communion with others always sprang from my consciousness of my communion with God. I did not desire religious or formal ecclesiastical communion in order that it might lead me to God. My religious consciousness and sense of satisfaction began with the knowledge of God, and I sought for the sympathy of others as the natural consequence and completion of this satisfaction. It is as when we look up into the midnight sky. We do not regard the heavens as a multitude of separate stars, but rather love and almost venerate each star, not so much for its own individual glory, as because it is a unit of the one illimitable organic universe, whose visible grandeur and beauty are all the more dear, because we know that far away beyond the reach of our sight, it shines in other worlds which the imagination faints in its attempt to conceive.

Thus it was that a separation from every religious community had not for me those terrors or that paralysing effect which might be supposed to be its necessary accompaniment. I could bear to be alone, painful as

was the solitude. My trust in God was never shaken; all my past mistakes I saw to be part of that mysterious heritage of ignorance which is the lot of all men; and I knew that my only course was to try to 'get wisdom, and to get understanding' as well as I might while I lived. There would be times when my sense of the pressure of this ignorance would rise to a real agony; but is it not so with thousands of men who have lived peaceably in the Church in which they were brought up? Who can live from youth to maturity, and from maturity to age, and not know this fearful strife, in which the soul's only resource is to cast herself, as it were blindfold, into the arms of God, and 'hide itself under the shadow of His wings, until this tyranny be overpast.'

In the meantime, too, what changes had not been taking place in the whole religious thought of England and Europe, of Protestantism and Catholicism together! Who that can look back to the Church of England of five-and-thirty years ago, can without an effort believe that this past world actually existed, and that he himself took his part therein? As I sit now and write, and remember what Oxford was when I first went up to reside, what Anglicanism was, what Roman Catholicism was, and what Dissent was, I almost rub my eyes, to be sure that it was not all a dream. How, then, after the many years and struggles that had passed by since I

entered on those controversies which are recorded in these pages, could I find myself standing alone among my countrymen, in whose vivid, religious, and social life my interest was as keen as ever,—how could I look upon the spiritual questions of the day from precisely those points of view from which I had studied them when I was ignorant, eager, self-reliant, and young?

There are some persons upon whom a submission to Rome works in the end an absolute want of interest in all religion, if not an absolute disbelief in the very possibility of learning anything about it. They have pledged everything upon the throw of the die; and finding that Rome is not the home of strict veracity, and that its inner life is no higher than that of the Anglicanism they have left, especially in this matter of truth-telling, and in practical freedom, they are driven back upon themselves with so violent a shock, that they care no longer to penetrate the mystery of their existence, and are content to live and die in darkness. With myself it was never so. Perhaps it was because I was never absorbed with what may be called the ecclesiastical passion; and always felt that, after all, a man's life must be lived in the presence of God alone. Thus it was that while I knew that I was cut off from all inner and outer communion with Rome, I was overpowered by no sense of desolation. All that I found to be necessary was the

review of the grounds of my trust in God himself, my present relations to Him, and my hopes of an eternity. At times the terrible shudder would run through me, and I asked bitterly, 'Is it not all a dream?' But it was only for a moment. And is it not the lot of every man who thinks, however firm his trust may be either in Rome or England, at times to feel this frightful shudder, and to tremble as if the world were rocking beneath his feet? These are not the things that men talk about. But it is my belief that these shivering terrors are as common in the Roman as in the English Church; and that many a devout priest, when he has been standing before the altar lifting up the chalice in his hands, has often been struck with the horrible thought, 'Is this my God that I hold before me and adore, or is it all a fearful dream?' Let no man think without the profoundest sympathy of these agonies of doubt that torture the souls of men and women of all creeds, while their faces wear a passionless calm, and their lips speak the speech of ordinary days. They are alone with their God; and though round about their trust in Him may be clustered some separate beliefs, which we hold to be superstitious, yet it is not the superstitions to which the trembling soul is clinging; it is to God, and God alone. 'The eternal God is their refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

For many years, therefore, I was conscious of no desire

to unite myself again to the old church in which I had lived until I submitted to Rome. It was certainly painful to be alone; but the pain was more endurable than would have been any other course. Besides, I was worn out and weary. So many years of inward strife, so many old associations torn asunder, so many hopes destroyed, so many bright visions vanishing in gloom, naturally left me exhausted and incapable of any fresh decision without years of rest. The English Church, too, though wonderfully changed since I first took orders among her clergy, was still in many respects the same as she had been when her defects began to seem unendurable in comparison with the supposed perfect consistencies of Rome. I was disenchanted with Rome; but could I resume my old work in England, judging her from my former standpoint? I did not find myself compelled to any immediate decision. I thought that perhaps I should never come to any decision.

Because, again, I had found Rome imperfect and unfaithful to her pretensions, was I therefore to take up the cry of those who can see in the English Church the spotless realising of the ideal set forth by Jesus Christ? Reasonable men who are also most loyal Anglicans, and who have never left the English Church, set up no such pretensions on her behalf. Much less could I do so, who had personally known the whole contrast between

Rome and England in all its details. It might suit a vulgar ignorant Protestant who knew no more of present facts than he does of the world before the flood, to rave against the Roman Church as the nurse of idolatry and the promoter of all crimes, just as a silly Spanish or Italian priest will denounce Protestantism as identical with atheism, and demand that Protestants should be extirpated from the face of the earth. To myself, on the contrary, setting aside the one fatal claim to infallibility, the question between the Roman and the English Churches was one of critical comparison. I had been driven from the world of idealism and hypotheses to that of facts. There was no longer any question as to whether I could find a Church, such as I had once conceived to be constantly referred to in the New Testament. Churches now appeared to me, as I saw they were beginning to appear to many others, simply institutions, whose merits and claims were to be judged of simply by observation, and not by any pre-conceived opinion as to what they ought to be, must be, or might be. The Anglican Church was to be studied as a fact, and by study of the phenomena she presented, and not by any theories as to the rights of man, the introduction of Christianity into Britain, or the Reformation under King Henry VIII. If I were ever to rejoin her, it must be because I saw that she rested upon some intelligible basis of reality, quite

unlike those fantastical theories which I had been asked to accept when I was an undergraduate, and those assumptions of supereminent sanctity of truth by which I had once been taught to believe that she stood supreme among all the Churches of the earth.

I know that there are still a good many of the English clergy, and some of the laity, who regard the English Church with that same awe-struck veneration with which the devoutest Ultramontane female convert venerates the Roman Church and all that belongs to it. They must worship the Church just as some young brides pretend to worship their husbands; it must either be free from all spot and failing, or not worthy of respect and attachment. Unquestionably this is the spirit in which some persons venerate the Church of England. Whether there are any men who are well educated, who have good abilities, and are more than fifty years old, who thus offer to the Church this indiscriminate honour and love, I cannot tell, but I very much doubt it. If the more intelligent clergy, of whatever school, would honestly speak their minds, they would by no means join in the blind eulogies which we hear on platforms and read in tracts. They would, I believe, regard the Church as a very fair subject for criticism, as a most useful, but by no means perfect institution, with which it is very difficult to meddle, for fear of bringing her all about their

ears, but which deserves neither the extravagant laudations of her friends nor the virulent abuse of her foes.

Such fair-minded men will sympathise very cordially in what I have said as to my natural desire for long repose after the exhausting struggles in which my thoughts had been involved. They will understand that what I needed above all things was rest for thought, rest for meditation, and rest during which my whole religious life might root itself again in the renewed love of Him without whom we are dead when we seem to be alive. There are few conditions, indeed, in which the mind is more terribly tried than when it has honestly left England for Rome, and at last has found its ideal of the true Church a fleeting vision. No one who has not made the trial can conceive the violent wrench with which the whole nature is shaken, and the awful blank which at the first gaze seems to be all that meets the eye of the weary soul. What may be the case of others whose experience has been the same as my own, I cannot tell. I have spoken to very few such persons, men or women. I hear various things said about them by way of reports; but usually their grounds for submitting to Rome were unlike my own, their way of studying her inner life was not mine, and they became Protestants again for reasons which do not weigh with me on one side or the other. With some I am afraid the result has been the lessening

of their general interest in the religious aspect of life, with others that interest may be as vivid as before.

I can well understand, too, how it is that so few have resumed their functions as clergymen of the English Church. A man must either have a very strong inclination for the peculiarities of clerical occupation, or an intense conviction of the truth of that creed which remains to him after all the hidden strifes through which he has passed; or, again, he must have arrived at some very clear and adequate conception of the functions of the Anglican Church herself before he enters upon a course of duties from which he has been so long estranged, and which he once laid aside. For it is not to be forgotten that the one great defect, as I once thought it, in the Church of England, is just what it always was. Anglicanism is a comprehensive term for various interpretations of Christianity, which are all but absolutely contradictory of one another. It was because her clergy believed and taught these contradictory religions that she seemed to me to exclude herself from that one true Church, to which I believe that Christ had promised and given the gift of an infallibly correct exposition of His revelation. In Rome, at any rate, I had found unity. This unity, I had practically learned, was attained at the expense of intellectual suicide, and was maintained by a cruel despotism; but still it exists; and every time

that it seems to be on the point of breaking up, it only exhibits its own coherence and the depths of human weakness in which it is rooted.

In the English Church, on the other hand, disunion of doctrine is as wide as ever. She has changed in almost every respect but this. In many things her advance has been wonderful. Her advance is far greater than that of her mighty Roman rival. The real competition for the future possession of the English mind is now indeed between Romanism and Anglicanism. I do not think that England is about to fall very soon under the dominion of Nonconformity. Either she will fly in despair to the uncompromising rule of old, historic, picturesque and daring Rome; or, under the guidance of her own national Church, she will 'stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free.'

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CHAPTER XXIII.

AT length, however, after many years' delay, I resolved to end my state of isolation, and to return to the old communion. In place of my old Anglican and Roman ideals, I found sufficient basis for a complete practical Church theory, in the recognition of the English Establishment as the Church of the English nation. First of all, I detected the hollowness of that Nonconformist view which draws a clear line between the relations of man to time and his relations to eternity, and imagines that when the whole nation acts in its corporate capacity, it is bound to regard only the secular interests of the individual men and women of whom it is made up. If religion is not literally a sham, an affair of talk, a make-believe of unintelligible theological phrases, then it must enter into all the daily affairs of life, and its influence on human character can by no possibility be overlooked.

There is, in truth, no distinction at all between secular and spiritual things, except that which we draw for convenience of speaking. If there is a God; if we are in most intimate relationship with Him every hour that we

live; if our every thought and act modifies that relationship, and affects our invisible as well as our visible life; it is mere affectation to pretend that we can legislate without some reference to the will of the Invisible Master. It is a solemn farce to pretend that we can act as if there were really a God so long as we do our duties as fathers, or neighbours, or employers, and throw off all recognition of His existence the moment we act as members of the same great nation. The moment this Dissenting idea is examined, its unreality betrays itself. No national law, whether ordained by a sovereign king or a sovereign parliament, can avoid the adoption of some theory of human nature into which the idea of God largely enters.

Whether, therefore, or not it may be expedient that the nation, as such, should provide for the religious instruction of its members, it is undeniable that it is within its province so to do. In fact, the moment any religious sect begins to possess property of its own, and to hold public worship, it must call in the aid of the supreme power, whether monarchical or republican, to protect it; in other words, to establish it. It cannot hold an acre of land, or lay the foundation-stone of a single building, without asking the State to sanction its holding that property, and allowing it to vest it in trustees for its own special religious purposes. Thus it is, that there are in

this country at present actually scores of sects which own their chapels, and hold their services in peace, through the protection of the temporal power whose interference they profess to denounce.

So, too, it is perfectly competent for the temporal power to say that it is expedient to place the means of religious instruction within the reach of every man and woman in the kingdom. Men who are entitled in their private capacities to build and endow churches are not robbed of that title the instant they are invested with a legislative capacity. My duties towards my brother are the same, whether I am simply his neighbour, or whether a majority of my neighbours are pleased to entrust me with making laws. It is my duty to God to do all I can for promoting the welfare of all my brother's interests in all possible relations of his life.

Unquestionably it is much easier thus to provide for popular religious teaching when the supreme power resides in a single monarch than when it is lodged in a representative body. The monarch has solely his own personal religious beliefs to consider, and to provide that his people shall be instructed in what he holds to be true. In the case of a parliament, unless all are agreed, which is practically impossible, there enters this formidable question, 'What religion shall we teach?' The answers to this preliminary inquiry would be so

multifarious that the problem would be solved by teaching nothing. Wherever, consequently, there are still established churches, it is because their original monarchical foundation has withstood every subsequent revolution; or where, as with England, a general religious belief in God and Christianity is combined with a real parliamentary representation. The result is anomalous to the last degree, but it exists. We have passed from a Royal and Feudal State, in which a certain religion was established, because every one believed in one creed; through a Reformation, in which one absolute sovereign after another altered the creed which was taught by the clergy of the establishment; after which the political constitution of the country gradually passed from a despotism to something very like a monarchical republic; the established creed meanwhile remaining little changed in its authorised formularies, while the opinions of its individual clergy and laity were again and again transformed. I pass over the period of the commonwealth, because it was a mere arbitrary suspension of the life of the Anglican establishment.

Such a history is without parallel in the records of nations. And the result is this marvellous anomaly which we now call the Church of England. Anomalous, though, as it is, in theory, in reality it is a representative of the vast majority of the English people; not merely

of their votes, but of the variations of their religious opinions. If the mere numerical majority of the electors were opposed to its continuance, they would have nothing to do but put an end to it by an Act of Parliament. But it is not merely in its representing the country numerically that I value the Church, and have returned to my clerical work within her borders; it is because she represents the variations in the intelligence and the religious views of the English people. There is no other Church in the world in which there are such internal differences, because there is no other country in the world where such opposite beliefs are held, with practical earnestness, by educated and uneducated men alike. The whole English mind is seething with the heat of theological convictions, inquiries, and doubts; and the English clergy furnish a tolerably fair representation of these conflicts. They represent English religion very much as Parliament represents English politics. That such an institution should have been set up all at once, in the midst of such a people, is impossible. If ever any strange institution grew, and was not deliberately manufactured, it is this wonderful Anglican establishment.

Such, then, being the diversities of English religion, it is, I hold, a most happy thing that we can agree to worship God in the same services, employing the labours

of the same clergy, and within the walls of the same venerable buildings. And it is because the Church of England of to-day is so emphatically a representative institution, and not a sect set up for the exclusive preaching of one single body of dogmas, that I have devoted to her service what now remains to me of a life, so much of which has been exhausted in the storms of controversy. Here, at least, is a Church in which the mysteriousness of the religious aspect of life is recognised, and we are taught that it is possible to serve God well, even though we are not equally advanced in our interpretation of the Bible and of the universe of thought and material order. I believe that the English Church is the freest Church in the world. So it is in our political constitution. It is an anomally among nations, yet under it we enjoy more personal liberty than in any other country in either hemisphere, unless it be the small republic of Switzerland, while unquestionably our religious freedom is more complete than it is among the Swiss. The English Church is the only ecclesiastical body, whether established or not, in which it is possible that the scientific and critical studies of the nineteenth century can be carried on, without a shattering of the existing formularies of our forefathers, and in which we may hope gradually to reconcile the past with the future.

And this possibility results from this simple fact, that

her clergy and her laity, while disagreeing with one another, are willing to pray in the same churches, to sign the same declarations of assent, to use the same prayers, and observe the same sacramental rites. I grant that this is a most marvellous state of affairs; but I maintain that it is justifiable, because nobody is deceived, and because it gives to the competing schools of thought a fair stage and something like a tolerable impartiality in the judges. Nobody is deceived, because Parliament rules the Church, and is itself the representative of the nation. It is the fashion now-a-days with many of the clergy and laity to lament this supremacy of Parliament, and to cry out for an episcopal and clerical government. For myself, I infinitely prefer the parliamentary rule, and that of the Courts of Justice where laymen administer the ecclesiastical laws of England. I do not believe in the Divine rights of bishops to make laws for the Church, nor to administer them when made. And I am satisfied that if the bishops themselves were to express their true opinions on the subject, probably a majority would be in favour of our present system. Certainly, if they could have experience of the opposite system, a very large majority would rapidly regret the loss of that lay predominance which they had ignorantly parted with.

In the Church of England as she is, then, needing

many reforms indeed, I find that practically useful institution with which in my older years I am content, far short as it falls of the ideal for which my young enthusiasm was wont to sigh. Essentially it is very much the institution which is referred to in the Gospels and Epistles, allowing for the changed circumstances of modern life, and the varying obstacles which the ages, as they pass by, present to the perfect development of Christian principles. I have given up looking out for ideals which are not founded upon facts. Human nature is not what we may wish it to be, but what God has made it. I cannot see that the various Christian Churches whose proceedings are detailed in the New Testament were better than the Church in which our lot is cast; while as for any ideally organised and united Church, it surely is spoken of in the Bible not as an actually living institution, but as simply the poetic embodiment of the whole body of Christians, living or dead. Throughout the whole there is nothing about popes, or hierarchies, or royal or parliamentary governments. Where Christians are practically regarded as joined together by an absolute unity, it is through an invisible bond, through a relationship which extends through all possible eras, and which binds the living and the dead together by a spiritual tie more real than any visible sway of living rulers.

That the Gospels and Epistles regard all devout souls

as united in this twofold relationship cannot surely be doubted. They are united individually to God Himself through their love and obedience and faith, in an intimacy which completes that tie which unites all creatures to Him who is the source of all being. And by virtue of the same love and obedience and faith they are united to one another invisibly, but really, and become brothers who are children of one Father. All this is the doctrine of Rome itself; only Rome superadds the invention of the Papacy, and the whole body of papal doctrine, and its suicidal dogma as to the absolute certainty of faith in the teaching of the Church. Protestants, on the contrary, ought surely to be satisfied with organisations like that of the English Church, which ensure some of the ends of all religious organisation, in a fashion, rough perhaps, and wanting frequent revision, and failing altogether of reaching any ideal, but on the whole suited to the times in which we live.

For myself, I find it enough to satisfy such ecclesiastical aspirations as remain to me, and as appear to me to be something more real than the visions of a student in his chair or a devotee upon her knees. Sometimes I dream of a future existence of the Church on earth which shall correspond in perfection to the most ardent hopes of the Catholic solitary or the pictures of the Protestant millenarian; but I know that it is only a formless haze of

rainbow hues, and that we can no more forecast the Christian organisation of a thousand years hence than we can foretell the future inhabitants of an American forest, or the doom of London and Paris when a hundred generations have passed away. The English Church is, however, as likely to stand and to be capable of reformation as any other society that calls itself by the name of Christ, and therefore in her I find myself at home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW far she has already endured the strain of a reformation approaching to revolution can hardly be realised by those who only know her as she now is, and whose experience of her changes is limited to an observation from within. It is only the traveller who has been for years away from home who can mark the alterations in feature, and growth, and character of those among whom he passed his earliest years. To those who like myself have lived for a quarter of a century outside her borders, and yet incessantly observed her growth from without, the identity of the English Church of to-day with that of 1845 is scarcely more startling than the revolutions which have taken place within her. I hardly know which is more striking, the unchanged old services, or the utterly new life which has been breathed into the Anglican worship.

Take, for instance, the universal introduction of hymns into Divine service. I remember the day when no hymns, except the few occasional hymns bound up in the Prayer-Book, were ever used except in churches where the Evangelical school was predominant. Often

they used Bishop Ken's 'Morning and Evening Hymns;' but except where the incumbent held Low Church views, the devout emotions of the faithful were compelled to express themselves in that wonderful caricature of the Psalms which was presented to a grateful country by Messrs Tate and Brady. Here and there in some church where change seemed impossible, the old version of Sternhold and Hopkins satisfied the rugged tastes of the aged, and Tate and Brady were unknown. Here, too, I should add, that in the old Catholic chapels hymns were almost equally unknown, and the hymns which are now so widely popular would have been repudiated by the old-fashioned priest as vigorously as if he were an ancient rector denouncing the heresies of the Olney Hymns themselves.

What do I see now wherever I go? Hymns are everywhere, and in churches where all kinds of theologies are taught. But this is a trifle. Just as in every Catholic church—they are all churches now, and not chapels—as in every Anglican church, the communion is 'celebrated,' and not 'administered;' just as in every Catholic church you are not safe from Faber, so in every Anglican church you are not safe from St Thomas Aquinas. Of all popular hymn-books none are so popular as 'Hymns, Ancient and Modern;' and in that amazing compilation is to be found that very hymn of St Thomas Aquinas

which I have quoted as placing in the very strongest light the suicidal logic of the doctrine of transubstantiation—

> 'Adoro te devotè, latens Deitas;
> Quæ sub his figuris verè latitas.'

> 'Thee we adore, O hidden Saviour, Thee
> Who in Thy Sacrament dost deign to be;'

is the translation in which it appears before us. It is true that the compilers have not ventured on the too startling verse which I quoted in a previous chapter. They do not ask us to sing—

> 'Visus, tactus, gustus, in te fallitur,
> Sed auditu solo tutô creditur.'

But they wind up with an open declaration that he who looks at the consecrated bread actually looks at Christ.

> 'O Christ, whom now beneath a veil we see.'

And surely, the extraordinary rapidity with which this compilation has rooted itself in the English Church is a proof of a general adoption of a tone of religious feeling which is in absolute contradiction with that of our fathers. And still more, it proves a diminution of active hostility towards Roman doctrine in quarters where there is not the smallest suspicion of a desire to adopt the Roman system in its completeness. As for that adoption of the dogma of transubstantiation which is now no longer a

wonder, and the whole system whlch goes by the name of Ritualism, I believe I am speaking within bounds when I say that such a rapid and quiet introduction of an entirely new creed and new externals is without precedent in the history of any Church since the days of the apostles. And this is the wonder, not that old doctrines, as in the early days of the Evangelical movement, have revived in spite of the most vehement and long prolonged resistance; but that without anything but a few occasional protests, transubstantiation has come to be taught in the hymn book of some church, where evangelicalism is preached from the pulpit, or on the other hand where it is well known that a liberal rector doubts the reality of the Scripture miracles themselves.

Or take the revolution on the other side. A generation ago no clergyman could venture to declare that he did not believe in the eternity of future punishment, or in the literal truth of every word of the Bible. Many still remember the storm which was roused by the appointment of Dr Milman to the Deanery of St Paul's, because he had written a 'History of the Jews,' in which a natural explanation was given to some of the Old Testament miracles, and (what struck the popular mind most forcibly) had dared to call the patriarch Abraham 'an Arab sheik.' When another man of science, this time of geological eminence, Dr Buckland, was also

made a Dean, the Anglican clergy were up in arms because such an appointment should have been given to a man who held that the world was not created in six successive days of twenty-four hours each. At this moment, who would venture to utter a word of objection to such appointments; or who believes that either ritualism or liberalism is really indicative of a Jesuitical traitorousness to the Church of England? Doubtless there are people who believe that there are Jesuits everywhere; but with rational persons the only question is as to the next manifestation of Romanism or unorthodoxy which we shall probably witness.

To my own mind, all these daring novelties are so many proofs of the vitality of the English Church as the representative of the changing views of the more intelligent and religious of the English people. They show that she is elastic and comprehensive to a degree without precedent since the patristric period; since, indeed, we know with any certainty what was the faith and worship of the Christian Church in general. I quite see the strange aspect which she may thus present to those whose sole notion of a Church is that of a body separated from the rest of the world, and converted into a sect, whether that sect is a little English sect of yesterday, or the great and magnificent sect which calls itself the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope, as the truth

appears to me, is only the chief monarch of a sect. By her essential spiritual principle, Rome is a 'denomination.' She is not based upon a recognition of human nature as it is; but upon an arbitrary division of human beings into priests, laymen, and women. She does not represent ordinary human nature, or Christianised human nature. She merely asserts that God has authorised a certain bishop, chosen by a few score of cardinals, themselves nominated by that bishop's predecessor or predecessors, to rule the whole of mankind, and to speak to the world with the voice of God. The English Church, on the contrary, is simply the institution through which the English people, speaking through a parliamentary majority, repeats, Sunday after Sunday, and day after day, its own interpretations of the Bible and its hopes of an eternal life to come.

How far, indeed, this institution will endure the strain put upon it by the extremes of opinion now held by her laity and taught by her clergy, I do not venture to predict. It is, in truth, a strain hitherto unparalleled; because the religious zeal of all parties is energetic even to burning, while the Parliament has become more emphatically than before the representative of all classes in the community. But, at the same time, I for my part am convinced that the essentially Nonconformist and Free Church principle which has been adopted by many

of the High Church school, as it at one time was in favour with the Evangelical party, is about to lose its weight in the conduct of English affairs. The theory that a secular Government, whether a monarchy or a parliamentary system, can overlook the influences of this or that religious teaching, is so contradictory to all the facts of human nature, that it can never endure. In some way or other the State must control the teaching of spiritual things. It may control it much after the fashion which now exists, and simply insist that the clergy of the Establishment shall conform to the decisions of the courts of law. Or it may insist upon some sort of control over the teaching of the Roman and other sects. Ample toleration is granted to all alike, as affairs now stand, because it is held that all denominations, in their degree, assist in promoting the material and spiritual well-being of Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen.

But it is quite possible, indeed, that the denominations may so employ their present liberty as to alarm the country; and then that liberty will be at an end. I do not expect that the Protestant denominations will thus mistake their true interests, and I believe that they have an important part to play in promoting their country's religious welfare. They play the part of an 'opposition,' like that of the opposition in the Houses of Lords and

Commons; and it is the Parliamentary opposition which prevents the 'Government' from degenerating into a tyranny. It is rather from the Roman side that I fear such indiscretion or ambition as may compel the nation to modify the freedom which all denominations now enjoy. But whatever be the case, I cannot share the fears of those churchmen who imagine that we are about to realise that fantastic idea of 'a free church in a free state.' So far from it, I rather expect that as time goes on, the free state will more and more clearly recognise the duty and necessity of securing that universality of religious teaching to all ranks and classes, which it is now beginning to regard as necessary in matters of secular education. If, therefore, the English clergy can only rise up to the necessities of their position, the day of the extinction of the Establishment is still far away.

Thus, on the whole, I have believed that in resuming my duties in the English Church I am not wasting my labours in trying to prop up a decaying society whose doom is already pronounced, or upholding a theory which will prove to be as baseless as the Roman theory of Pontifical authority. If the English Church dies, it will be by suicide, and not through the illogical passionateness of the English people. And while she lives, with all her defects, I know no other religious

community which exercises so healthy and powerful an influence in preparing those who own her sway for the awful moment of death that awaits every human being who is born into this world.

THE END.

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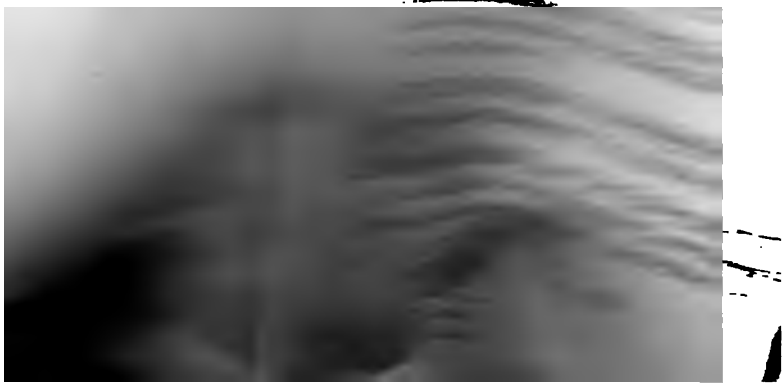

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